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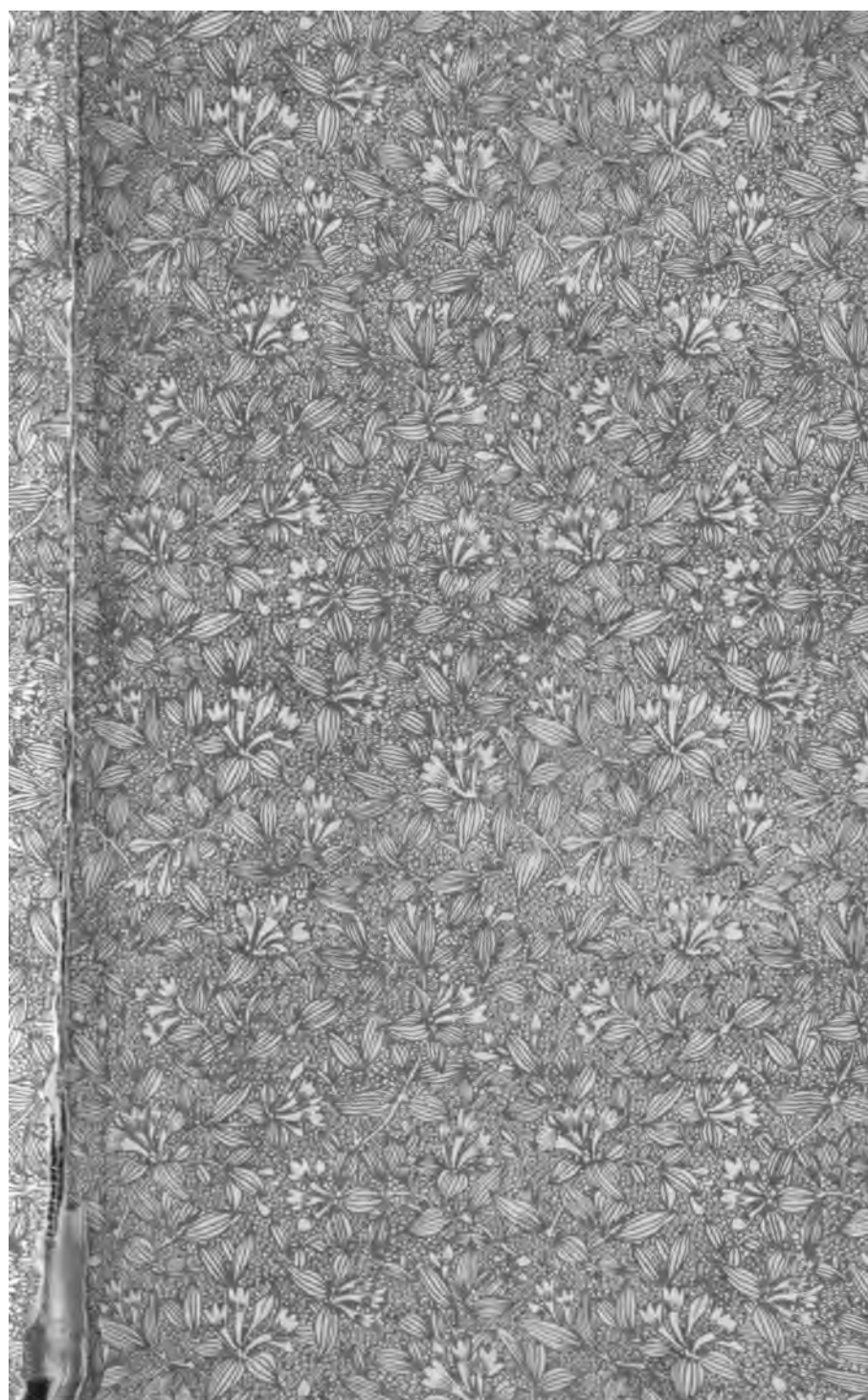
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ENGLISH LITERATURE

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LITERARY CRITICISM.

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO SYSTEMATIC READING AND STUDY.

COMPRISING

TYPICAL SELECTIONS, ILLUSTRATIVE CRITICISMS, AND EXHAUSTIVE
ANALYSES OF THE BEST AND MOST NOTABLE WORKS
IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

TOGETHER WITH

COPIOUS REFERENCES, SUGGESTIONS, AND AIDS FOR THE STUDENT
AND GENERAL READER.

BY

JAMES BALDWIN,

SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, HUNTINGTON, INDIANA. AUTHOR OF "THE
TEACHER'S REGISTER," "THE STORY OF SIEGFRIED,"
ETC., ETC.

ENGLISH POETRY.

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By JAMES BALDWIN
1882

PREFACE.

THIS book is not a History of English Literature. It aims rather to serve as a guide to the acquirement of a practical acquaintanceship with all that is the best and the most worthy in our literature. The chronological arrangement, usually adopted in books upon this subject, has been in most part abandoned for the more natural arrangement by which works of a similar kind are grouped and studied together and compared with each other. This, in the author's judgment, is the only true method of study. To those who may find fault with his classification, he will only say that he has chosen that arrangement which he considers the most convenient for giving aid and information to those in search of a certain kind of knowledge. One man may call a particular poem a Romance, another may call it an Epic; but it matters not so much what we call it as how and in what connection we present it to the attention of the reader or student. No apology is offered for the large number of quotations and extracts which are made from the leading English critics. The brief presentation of the opinions of so many of our best writers on so great a variety of literary productions is a feature of the work which it is believed will be found of special interest and value. The name of the critic quoted is usually given in connection with the quotation, and in all cases it may be found in the Index of Criticisms at the end of the volume. The list of References appended to

each chapter will direct the student to the best works relating to the subjects discussed, and will enable him to carry on his studies independently and in whatever direction his taste may dictate.

To those who prefer to study all the works of an author consecutively, the Index of Authors appended to this volume will suggest the means by which such study may be advantageously pursued. The same Index will afford all the biographical information that it is thought necessary to give in a work on English Literature. The student should consult a biographical dictionary, and, whenever possible, the books of reference mentioned in this work.

In his choice of illustrative quotations, the author has endeavored to select only such as would be of practical value in exemplifying certain peculiarities in the style of the poet—or poem—quoted, or such as would best serve to arouse additional interest on the part of the student and urge him to further study. The best versions and the most approved texts have been followed, and—with only one or two exceptions—the orthography and punctuation of the originals have been carefully preserved. Except in a very few cases, where it was thought that such references would be a practical help to the student, it has not been deemed necessary to encumber the pages and enlarge the volume with references by note to the sources or the editions from which illustrative quotations have been derived. The arrangement of subjects is such that the study of English Literature may be begun with any chapter and followed in any order that the wishes or the judgment of teachers and students may suggest.

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ENGLISH LITERATURE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE word Literature is used, in its broadest sense, to designate all of the written productions of every age and every people. Properly restricted, however, it refers only to those writings which are, or have been, of general interest to man, and which are the results of labor and the offspring of genius. The literature of a country is, from the very nature of its production, the reflection of the character and the inner life of the people of that country. It acquaints us with matters pertaining to their social and moral condition, and gives us an insight into their modes of action and their manner of thought. Bringing us, as it does, into contact with the master-minds of past ages, and making us familiar with the best thoughts of the greatest thinkers, its study can scarcely fail to exert a powerful influence towards strengthening and refining our own intellectual faculties.

English literature includes all that has been written in the English language,—whether by Englishmen or by Americans,—and which from the excellence of its character has been deemed worthy of preservation. The literature of no other people is so interesting or so complete; none have written on such a variety of subjects or with greater care and skill. “It is rare to find,” says M. Taine, “a people with a literature so grand. There are few nations

who have, during their whole existence, really thought and written. Among the ancients, the Latin literature is worth nothing at the outset; then it borrowed, and became imitative. Among the moderns, German literature does not exist for nearly two centuries. Italian literature and Spanish literature end at the middle of the seventeenth century. Only ancient Greece, modern France, and England offer a complete series of significant monuments."

The student of English literature has entered upon a broad field,—one so vast, indeed, that a life-time of study will enable him to master only parts of the stupendous whole which lies before him. He should approach the work with an earnest, inquiring spirit and an enthusiastic desire for knowledge and mental improvement. He should not rest content with merely superficial attainments, but should strive for that thoroughness without which there is neither true excellence nor enjoyment. He must not expect to find the whole of English literature in a single book or in any number of books. It is not a mere array of names and dates, of short biographical sketches, and select quotations from standard authors. Neither does it consist of a series of ingenious and sentimental speculations relative to the love-affairs, the religious opinions, the politics, of great writers. It deals primarily with books; and the study of these books necessarily involves the investigation of every important circumstance connected with their production.

To acquire any serviceable knowledge of a book, the student must become familiar with the conditions under which it was first conceived. He must become acquainted with the history of the country and of the period which produced it. Moreover, he should seek to trace the influence which that book has exerted, or is likely to exert, upon subsequent events. For there is a mutual and all-important interdependence between history and literature which should never be overlooked. "A book is the offspring of the aggregate intellect of humanity," and it gives back to humanity, in the shape of new ideas and new

combinations of old ideas, not only all that it has derived from it, but more—increased intellectual vitality, and springs of action hitherto unknown.

For the proper understanding and enjoyment of a book, a knowledge of its author is often important and sometimes necessary. But the value of this kind of biographical knowledge has been frequently and very generally overestimated. The excellence of Shakspeare's works is no whit diminished by the paucity of our knowledge concerning his life. The *Lady of the Lake* may be thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed by those who have never heard of Sir Walter Scott, and but little would be added to the real value of the *Junius Letters* should the mystery of their authorship be solved. But a knowledge of the political, social, and religious environment is more frequently indispensable.

Again, the earnest student will be interested in tracing the influences of climate, of geographical position, of race, of surroundings, upon a people's modes of thought. He will perceive how these modes of thought have imparted individuality and character to the literature, and then how literature has exerted a reflex action upon the character of the people. A study of literature, therefore, includes a thorough and systematic study of history. Properly pursued, it will embrace also a knowledge of geography, of ethnology, psychology, sociology, and all those branches of science which have to do with man in his intellectual capacity and in his relations to his fellow-man.

Still further, in order to appreciate a book and its author's modes of thought and expression, and to profit by its study to the fullest extent, the student should acquire a certain knowledge of the laws of rhetoric. And here the reflex influences of literature and a study of literature are seen to the greatest advantage. For in what better way can we secure a knowledge of correct and elegant modes of thought and expression than by the study of the style and language of our best writers? Thus the study of literary

criticism becomes of high importance. What has this famous critic said about the book we are studying? Why does he speak thus favorably or thus unfavorably of the work? By what means, or for what reasons, have different critics arrived at opinions so diverse? In the consideration of such questions as these, the student himself becomes insensibly a critic. His powers of observation are sharpened, his taste is improved, his judgment is cultivated.

In short, any study of literature, worthy to be called such, is so comprehensive in its character as not only to embrace a knowledge of books and of authors, but to bring into action almost every faculty of our minds, and to make us, in a degree, acquainted with all that pertains to the mental and social development of man. Properly pursued, it is able to increase to an infinite degree our means for self-improvement and our capacity for intellectual enjoyment.

The literature of every people has two great divisions, one of which is called Poetry, the other Prose. The earliest as well as the greatest works produced in the English language belong to the first of these divisions. Poetry is the spontaneous outburst of the nobler feelings of the soul. It appeals mainly to our imaginative faculties and to our sense of the beautiful, the true, the sublime. In its aim and tendency, it is a fine art, entertaining and teaching us by awakening our minds into sympathy with the higher and diviner side of things. Prose, on the other hand, is matter-of-fact, dealing directly with our understandings and with the every-day necessities of our nature. Its function is both to instruct and to give delight; but it deals in the realities, or at least in the probabilities, of life, and appeals rather to our judgment than to our imagination.

In the present volume, we shall endeavor to direct the student to a systematic study and a practical knowledge of English poetry—to point out the methods and the means by which he may acquire a direct and personal

acquaintanceship with that branch of English literature. We shall direct his attention first and principally to books, and to the opinions of our best critics concerning them. We shall urge upon him the necessity of a thorough knowledge of the times and the circumstances which produced those works, and shall indicate the means by which he can best acquire that knowledge. We shall send him to books of history for historical facts, and to books of biography for the necessary information concerning the lives of our authors. We shall quote only such parts of the books or the poems treated as are necessary either to arouse an interest in them or to assist in the proper conception of their merits. We shall make frequent short extracts from the most noted critical writers on English poetry, thereby introducing the student to a practical acquaintance with the best examples of literary criticism. No single book is English literature; no single book can teach English literature. The best book can be no more than a guide, directing the student in the way by which he may acquire a beneficial knowledge of some portion of that vast subject. And it is such a guide that the present work aspires to be.

ENGLISH POETRY.

POETRY hath, in the noblest nations and languages that are known, ever been the first light-giver to ignorance. Let learned Greece, in any of her manifold sciences, be able to show me one book before Musæus, Homer, and Hesiod, all three nothing less than poets. So among the Romans were Livius, Andronicus, and Ennius. So in the Italian language, the first that made it aspire to be a treasure-house of science were the poets Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch. So in our English were Gower and Chaucer: after whom, encouraged and delighted with their excellent foregoing, others have followed to beautify our mother-tongue, as well in the same kind as other arts.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

Poetry hath something divine in it, because it raiseth the mind and hurrieth it into sublimity by conforming the shows of things to the desires of the soul, instead of subjecting the soul to external things as reason and history do.

LORD BACON.

As imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

SHAKSPEARE.

Now poesy is the habit or the art; nay, rather the queen of arts, which had her original from heaven, received thence from the Hebrews, and had in prime estimation with the Greeks, transmitted to the Latins and all nations

that professed civility. The study of it offers to mankind a certain rule and pattern of living well and happily, disposing us to all civil offices of society. It nourisheth and instructeth our youth, delights our age, adorns our prosperity, comforts our adversity, entertains us at home, keeps us company abroad, travels with us, watches, divides the time of our earnest and sports, shares in our country recesses and recreations; insomuch that the wisest and best learned have thought her the absolute mistress of manners, and nearest of kin to virtue.

BEN JONSON.

Poetry produces an illusion on the eye of the mind, as a magic-lantern produces an illusion on the eye of the body. And, as the magic-lantern acts best in a dark room, poetry effects its purpose most completely in a dark age. As the light of knowledge breaks in upon its exhibitions, as the outlines of certainty become more and more definite and the shades of probability more and more distinct, the hues and lineaments of the phantoms which the poet calls up grow fainter and fainter. We cannot unite the incompatible advantages of reality and deception, the clear discernment of truth and the exquisite enjoyment of fiction.

MACAULAY.

Poetry is not a branch of authorship: it is "the stuff of which our life is made." The rest is "mere oblivion," a dead letter; for all that is worth remembering in life is the poetry of it. Fear is poetry, hope is poetry, love is poetry, hatred is poetry; contempt, jealousy, remorse, admiration, wonder, pity, despair, madness, are all poetry. Poetry is that fine particle within us that expands, rarifies, raises our whole being; without it, "man's life is poor as beasts'."

HAZLITT.

DEFINITIONS.

THE following definitions are given here for the convenience of such students as may desire to refer to them :

Poetry may be defined as that division of literature which addresses itself to the imagination and the passions, and whose primary object is to please.

Versification has reference to the arrangement of the words in poetry, so that the tones of the voice in reading may harmonize with the thoughts expressed or the feeling to be conveyed.

A verse is a single line of poetry.

A stanza is a collection of verses methodically arranged.

A poem is a collection of verses or stanzas written upon some particular topic in accordance with the rules for poetic composition.

Rhyme is the systematic repetition or recurrence of syllables having a certain similarity of sound. It usually occurs at the end of a verse.

Rhythm is the arrangement of words by which the regular occurrence of accents or impulses of the voice is secured.

Metre is the division of a verse into parts called feet.

A foot is the combination of two or more syllables according to the rhythm accent.

A trochee is a foot of two syllables, the first being accented.

An iambus is a foot of two syllables, the second being accented. Iambic poetry is the most common in the language.

A spondee is a foot of two syllables, both being accented alike.

A dactyl is a foot of three syllables, the first being accented.

An amphibrach is a foot of three syllables, the second being accented.

An anapest is a foot of three syllables, the third being accented.

Verses are described according to the number of feet which they contain. As, a monometer is a verse of one foot; a dimeter, a verse of two feet; a trimeter, one of three feet; a tetrameter, one of four feet; a pentameter, one of five feet; a hexameter, one of six feet, etc.

Blank verse is poetry which has metre but not rhyme.

Heroic verse is a name applied to blank verse written in iambic pentameter measure.

An Alexandrine is an iambic verse of twelve syllables.

CLASSIFICATION.

POETRY has been classified in a great variety of ways. No matter what may be the basis upon which the classification is made, the different divisions merge so imperceptibly into each other, that the same poem may often with propriety be said to belong to two or more classes. For convenience of treatment, we shall arrange all the poetry in our literature according to the following classification:

1. Anglo-Saxon Poetry, embracing that which was written during the Anglo-Saxon supremacy in England, A.D. 449 to 1066.
2. Poetry of the Transition Period, A.D. 1066 to 1362.
3. Poetical Romances.
4. Story-Telling Poetry.
5. Allegories.
6. Historical Poetry.
7. Epic Poetry.
8. Dramatic Poetry.
9. Lyrical Poetry.
10. Satirical Poetry.
11. Descriptive Poetry.
12. Pastoral Poetry.
13. Didactic Poetry.
14. Miscellaneous Poetry.

AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES.

THE first work on poetry, and, indeed, the first piece of literary criticism written in the English language, was *The Defense of Poesie*, by Sir Philip Sidney, published in 1595.

The History of English Poetry from the eleventh to the seventeenth century, by Thomas Warton, Poet Laureate, is a curious and valuable work.

For general criticisms and information, the student is referred to Morley's *English Writers*.

Craik's *English Literature*.

Hallam's *Literature of Europe*.

Wright's *Biographia Poetica*.

Taine's *History of English Literature*.

Leigh Hunt's *Men, Women, and Books*.

Hazlitt's *Lectures on the English Poets*.

Allibone's *Dictionary of British and American Authors*.

Grant Wilson's *Poets of Scotland*.

Macaulay's *Essay on Milton*.

CHAPTER I.

ANGLO-SAXON POETRY.

A.D. 449-1066.

The Anglo-Saxon Language—The First Literature—Beowulf—Battle of Finnesburgh—Battle of Brunanburh—An Old Scandinavian Poem—Ragnar Lodbrok—Religious Poetry—Cædmon—Cædmon and Milton—Aldhelm—The Grave—Exeter Book—Vercelli Book—Characteristics of Anglo-Saxon Verse—Alliteration.

RATHER more than fourteen hundred years ago the ancestors of the English race left their ancient homes in Schleswig-Holstein and Jutland, and emigrated to the island then known as Britain. They were variously designated among themselves and by the Britons as Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and, finally, as English. The country of which they took possession they called Angla-Land, or Engla-Land, and the language which they spoke they called Englisc. This language, to which scholars have now quite generally agreed to apply the name Anglo-Saxon, is not much like modern English. Indeed, it is as different from our language as the Latin of the time of Julius Cæsar is different from the French now spoken in Paris. And yet this Englisc or Anglo-Saxon language is the basis or groundwork upon which, by means of successive additions and alterations, the superstructure of modern English has been built. In our next chapter we shall endeavor to explain how this was brought about. To understand the Anglo-Saxon language requires as much special study and preparation as to understand any foreign tongue. For at least half of the words used by those who once spoke or wrote it have fallen into disuse, and are not known to the English language; while, on the other hand, more than half

of the words which we now use, being of Latin or French origin, were unknown to our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. The grammatical forms and construction, too, of the old language were very complex, many of the parts of speech being highly inflected, as in Latin; while the English is very simple in its construction, and there are few inflections or variations.

For more than six hundred years—from 449 to 1066—Anglo-Saxon was the language of the people of England. During this time, there were but few changes—the isolation of the country and the home-loving character of the people preventing the introduction of many foreign terms or expressions. The Britons, who inhabited the country previously to the invasion of the Anglo-Saxons, had been either quietly absorbed by the more energetic race or driven to seek refuge among the hills and mountains of the western peninsulas. They spoke a language very different from that of their conquerors; and it is strange that, although these two languages existed side by side for centuries, but very few words of British origin were ever incorporated into the Anglo-Saxon. The language of the Britons is still spoken in its original purity by the Welsh in Wales. And among the 40,000 words in our modern English vocabulary not more than a hundred have been directly derived from British or Welsh sources.

The conversion of the English to Christianity occurred about the year 600. The Roman missionaries, by whom this conversion was effected, were not only zealous in the propagation of their religious faith, but they introduced the use of the Roman alphabet in place of the ancient Runic characters, and taught their disciples to read Latin books. Brought thus into contact with other and higher forms of life and thought, our ancestors made rapid progress in the acquisition of knowledge. Hitherto they had known no literature, save a few war-songs and some heroic legends brought with them from the continent and preserved by oral tradition only. But no sooner had the new religion and the learning of Southern Europe been intro-

duced, than men began to think and write. A varied and somewhat extensive literature sprang into existence, imperfect in its spontaneous outbursts, but soon embracing works on almost every branch of knowledge. To these crude productions of the Anglo-Saxons we trace the beginnings of English literature. The literature of the Anglo-Saxon period bears a relation to the more finished literature of later times somewhat similar to that which the imperfect chrysalis bears to the full-formed butterfly. And, as in studying the natural history of the butterfly we cannot ignore its formative period of existence, neither can the student of English literature omit the study of its imperfect beginnings in that first English of our ancestors—the Anglo-Saxon tongue.

The first form in which the literature of the Anglo-Saxons appeared was poetry; and, indeed, this is the form in which the earliest literature of every people has been written. In a rude state of society, men live in close communion with nature, the source of all poetic inspiration. Their ideas are simple and child-like, and their language abounds in homely but beautiful imagery. Cold science has not yet taught them to measure and calculate, nor has philosophy checked the reins of their imagination. Everything which they see or hear is regarded as being actuated by some living, sentient force; and every phenomenon of nature is considered as the visible manifestation of some half-natural, half-spiritual principle in sympathy with or antagonistic to mankind. The expression of their commonest thoughts naturally assumes the poetic form, and bursts spontaneously from their lips. All things beautiful, sublime, or terrific are habitually personified; and even abstract ideas are clothed in the garb of metaphor. For instance, the earth is spoken of as a kind mother, the sunlight as a conquering hero, the spring-time as a gentle maiden, the darkness as a plotting thief: ships are great "sea-steeds," the sea is the "swan-road," the sun is "God's bright candle." To a state of society where men thus

think and speak, poetry and mythology trace alike their earliest beginnings.

Another reason why poetry appears before prose in a nation's literature is that among a comparatively illiterate people the memory of great deeds and wonderful events is more easily preserved through the medium of song than by any other means. Poems recounting the achievements of heroes or reciting the praises of the gods are composed; they are sung at popular gatherings and from house to house by the minstrels or bards; they are handed down by oral tradition from one generation to another, until, finally, they are committed to writing and permanently incorporated in the literature of the people. The great subjects of which all this early poetry treats are Man and Nature:—man in his relations to his fellow-men and to the higher powers, and nature in her more awful and seemingly miraculous manifestations.

The oldest Anglo-Saxon poem in existence is the legend of the mythical hero Beowulf. It was doubtless composed and sung by our forefathers while yet they lived in the homeland of the race, in Schleswig and Jutland; and it was brought by them to Britain probably as early as the latter part of the fifth century. In its original form, it was, no doubt, thoroughly pagan in style and character. But in the form in which we now have it, it is a revision by an English Christian of the eighth century; and it is plain that its monkish reviser has attempted to modify many passages by introducing ideas more in consonance with the new religion. Yet, notwithstanding this doubtful effort to make the old hero-legend more acceptable to Christian readers and hearers, it still preserves much of the original pagan tone and temper; and it paints in vivid colors the life and manners and modes of thought which characterized our rude forefathers.

Beowulf was a hero of the primitive type, fearless, strong, and generous—"grand simply by his deeds." "He rowed upon the sea, his naked sword hard in his hand, amidst the

fierce waves and coldest of storms, and the rage of winter hurtled over the waves of the deep." To the land of the Danes he came, and to the great hall of old King Hrothgar; him he freed from a strange monster of the fens and moors, called Grendel. Then, after a long life of daring deeds and wise chieftainship, having ruled his people well for fifty years, he was slain in combat with a fiery dragon, and his body was solemnly burned, high up on a sea-washed promontory. This, in brief, is the story of Beowulf, but the poem is chiefly valuable for the insight which it gives us into the character and feelings of the people of the time when it was composed. The idea of fatalism—an idea not altogether confined to heathenism—is very prominent throughout this and other poems of the Anglo-Saxon period. "What is to be, must be." "To us it must be as our Fate betides, that Fate which is every man's lord!" cries Beowulf when he is wounded unto death. "Each one of us must abide the end of his present life." And yet there was among those sturdy old forefathers of ours an abundance of self-reliance, a strong sense of honor, a contempt for cowardice of every kind. "The Must Be often helps an doomed man when he is brave." "Let him who can work, work his doomed deeds ere death comes." "Death is better than a life of shame!"

The scene of the story of Beowulf is probably the island of Seeland, in Denmark. But the Englishman who revised the poem has described in it that part of the Northumbrian sea-coast which was familiar to him—the bold promontory and the high cliffs in the neighborhood of Whitby. Everywhere throughout the poem we are brought face to face with wild nature as it was seen and understood by our nature-worshipping ancestors, and our minds are impressed with their intense love for the sea and their fierce passion for war. Rude in manner and rough in action though they were, yet we cannot fail to perceive that their minds were imbued with a high sense of justice, of patriotism, of "manliness and the worth of man." Worthy ancestors, indeed, were they of the people who, in

this nineteenth century, are the acknowledged champions of liberty and the leaders of the world.

Besides the story of Beowulf, we have two or three other war-songs belonging to the Anglo-Saxon period, all breathing the same spirit of submission to the decrees of fate, of stern devotion to principle, and of hatred and defiance to the enemies of the country.

The Battle of Finnesburgh, found written on the back of a manuscript of homilies, also belongs, probably, to the old pagan days:

The army goes forth; the birds sing, the cricket chirps, the war-weapons sound, the lance clangs against the shield. Now shineth the moon, wandering under the sky. Now arise deeds of woe which the enmity of this people makes ready to do. . . . Then in the court came the tumult of war-carnage. They seized in their hands the hollow wood of the shield. They smote through the bones of the head. The roofs of the castle resounded, until Garulf fell in battle, the first of earth-dwelling men, son of Guthlaf. Around him lay many brave men dying. The raven whirled about, dark and sombre, like a willow leaf. There was a sparkling of blades, as if all Finnesburgh were on fire. Never have I heard of a more worthy battle in war.

Compare this with the *Battle-Song of Brunanburh*, written three hundred years later, and we shall see how the old martial spirit survived, and how the sombre earnestness and dreary imagery of the singers suffered no decay.

The king Ethelstan, chief of chiefs, he who bestows the collar of honor on the brave, and his brother Edmund the atheling, a lasting glory won with the edges of swords at Brunanburh. They cleaved the wall of bucklers, they hewed the noble banners with the wrecks of their hammers. So were they taught to defend their land, their homes and their hoards against any robber. From sunrise in the morning-tide, and whilst the greatest star, God's candle bright, glided over the earth and until the noble creature sat in the western main, there lay many of the northern men struck down with darts, shot over their shields. . . . The

screamers of war they left behind; the raven to enjoy, the black raven with the pointed beak, the hoarse toad, the eagle famishing for flesh, the greedy battle-hawk, and that yellow beast, the wolf of the wood.

Another war-song, *The Fight at Maldon* (A.D. 991), is similar; but it differs from the others in being the record not of victory, but of defeat.

I cannot close this brief notice of the war-poetry of the Anglo-Saxons without speaking of another famous song, which, though written in another tongue and belonging strictly to another country and another literature, originated in an event that occurred in England probably in the eighth century. I know of nothing which illustrates more vividly the warlike fury, the fearless exultation, the intense fatalism, so characteristic of both Saxons and Danes. It shows, too, that the songs and poetic imagery of German and Scandinavian must have had a common origin, doubtless in the pagan legends such as have been preserved in the Edda and in the northern sagas. The Norse viking, Ragnar Lodbrok, having made an unsuccessful descent upon the coast of Northumbria, was taken prisoner by King Ella and thrown into a dungeon filled with vipers and poisonous snakes. A song purporting to have been composed and sung by him while enduring the fearful agonies of death was for a long time current and very popular in Norse literature. It was a poem of considerable length, consisting of twenty-nine strophes or stanzas. The following extracts will suffice here:

We struck with our swords in the time when yet young; I went towards the east to prepare the repast of blood for the wolves, and in the great combat wherein I sent the people of Helsinghie in crowds to the palace of Odin. Thence our vessels bore us to the mouth of the Vistula, where our lances pierced the cuirasses, and our swords broke the bucklers.

We struck with our swords on the day when I saw hundreds of men prostrate on the sand near a high promontory of England;

a dew of blood dropped from our swords; the arrows whistled as they went seeking the helmets.

We struck with our swords; and now I feel that men are the slaves of destiny, and obey the decrees of the spirits who preside over their birth. Never did I think that death would come to me through this Ella, when I urged my vessels so far across the waves, and gave such banquets to the wild beasts. But I smile with pleasure when I consider that a place is reserved for me in the halls of Odin, and that soon, seated there at the great banquet-table, we shall drink flowing draughts of mead in our cups of horn.

We struck with our swords in fifty and one combats; I doubt whether among men there is a king more famous than I. From my youth I have shed blood and desired an end like this. The Valkyries sent by Odin to meet me call to me and invite me; I go, seated among the foremost, to drink mead with the gods. The hours of my life are passing away; I shall die laughing.*

Such was the war-poetry of the Anglo-Saxons; and their religious poetry differed from it mainly in the subjects treated. The same tone and sentiment prevail in both; and, in both, all the peculiarities of character which distinguish our sturdy forefathers are vividly portrayed.

The religious poetry of the Anglo-Saxons began with Cædmon, who, indeed, was the first true English writer; for the poems written before his time are not native to England—they belong to the race, but not to the soil. The Venerable Bede tells us that, although many writers tried to imitate Cædmon, none could vie with him in the making of religious poems; “for he did not learn the art of poetry from men, nor of men, but from God.” The following is the story of the miraculous inspiration of this the oldest of English poets:

Cædmon was engaged in some capacity, either as servant or tenant, at the famous abbey of Hilda, at Whitby, in Northumberland. According to Bede’s account, he was ignorant and unlearned, and knew nothing of the art of music. When he sat in company in the great feast-hall,

* Sharon Turner’s *History of the Anglo-Saxons*.

and the harp was passed from hand to hand, and all were expected to sing and play in turn, he was in the habit of excusing himself on account of his ignorance of music. One night, having thus left the feast and his noisy companions, he went to the stables where it was his duty to watch the cattle; and there, pondering upon the matter, and no doubt yearning for a form of song higher and better than the rude melodies of the banquet-hall, he fell asleep; and while he slept he dreamed that some one came to him and said:

"Cædmon, sing me something."

Cædmon answered, "I cannot sing, and it was for this reason that I left the banquet-hall."

Then said the one who had come to him, "But you must sing!"

"What shall I sing?" asked Cædmon.

"Sing the beginning of things," was the answer.

Then Cædmon began at once to sing verses in praise of the Creator:

Now must we glorify
 The Guardian of heaven's kingdom,
 The Maker's might,
 And his mind's thought,
 The work of the worshiped Father
 When of his wonders, each one,
 The ever-living Lord
 Ordered the origin.
 He erst created
 For earth's children
 Heaven as a high roof,
 The Holy Creator;
 Then this mid-world
 Did man's great guardian
 The ever-living Lord
 Afterward prepare,
 For men a mansion,
 The Master Almighty.*

* Hadley's Translation.

When Cædmon awoke, he remembered the verses which he had sung in his dream, and he made others like them. In the morning he went to the steward of the abbey and told him of his dream and of the gift of song which had so strangely been bestowed upon him. And when the Abbess Hilda heard his story, and the verses which he had composed, she was highly pleased, and said that surely heavenly grace had been conferred upon him. From that time until the close of his life, Cædmon devoted himself to the study of the Scriptures and to the composition of sacred songs. All of his subjects were taken from the Bible. He sang of the creation, of the war in heaven, of the fall of Satan. He wrote also in paraphrase the history of Israel, the book of Daniel, and the life of Christ.

The following short extracts, more than any description, will illustrate the peculiar power and the rugged beauty by which Cædmon's poems are characterized :

There was not yet, save cavern shade,
Aught made; but the wide earth
Stood deep and dim, to its Lord strange,
Idle, and useless; on which with his eyes gazed
The firm-minded King, and the places beheld
Void of joys; saw the dark cloud
Lower in eternal night, swart under heaven,
Wan and waste, until this world-creation
Through word of the Wonder-King was formed;
Here first the eternal God,
The Protector of all peoples, shaped heaven and earth,
Reared the heavens, and this roomy land
Established, with strong might,
The Almighty Sovereign. Earth was then
As to grass ungreen. Wan waves
Covered the ocean, far and wide,
In swart eternal night.

One would think that Milton must have borrowed some of his inspiration from Cædmon's description of the war

in heaven, and that *Paradise Lost* is but the finished picture of which Cædmon's paraphrase is the sketch. Compare these two extracts:

Satan then with words quoth :

"How very unlike is this narrow place
To that other that we ere knew,
High in heaven's kingdom, which my lord to me presented.
. . . He hath not rightly done,
To throw us thus in fire to bottom
Of hell the hot, and, taking heaven's kingdom,
To destine it for man's abode.
This to me is worst of sorrows,
That Adam, who from earth was wrought,
Shall sit on my strong throne,
And be himself in bliss, while we
Suffer this punishment, this grief in hell!
Wo lo! had I my hands' power,
And might one hour be free,
One winter hour, then with these hosts, I—
But around me lie iron bonds,
Cords of chain oppress: I am kingdomless!
Have me so hard hell clasps
Fast seized! Here is mickle fire
Above and underneath! I never saw
A loathlier landscape! The fire ne'er smoulders
Hot over hell. These fastening rings,
These terrible ropes, have my departure hindered,
Debarred me from my way; my feet are bound,
My hands are held. The ways of these
Hell-doors are closed; so I may not in any way
These limb-bonds escape."

CÆDMON'S *Genesis*, 356-385.

"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,"
Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat
That we must change for heaven; this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so! since he
Who now is Sov'reign can dispose and bid
What shall be right. . . ."

. . . Farewell, happy fields,
 Where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,
 Infernal world! And thou, profoundest Hell,
 Receive thy new possessor; one who brings
 A mind not to be changed by place or time."

Paradise Lost, I., 242-253.

Other parallel passages might be cited showing that, over a space of a thousand years, England's two great poets are brought together by similarity of thought, of expression, and of character. But we pass to the other religious poets and poems of the Anglo-Saxon period.

Aldhelm, who was a young man when Cædmon died, was Abbot of Malmesbury, and not only a religious poet, but a skillful musician as well. It is said, on the authority of King Alfred, that no one could excel or even equal him as a writer of religious hymns and of warlike odes. And a pleasant story is told us, that when the traders came into his town on Sunday, he stood on the bridge, and, by his singing, attracted the passers-by, and thus induced many to leave their trade until the morrow. His songs were very popular even down to the time of King Alfred; but we do not know that any of them have been preserved to us. We have only his Latin verses, *De Laude Virginum*, and a prose work, *De Virginitate*.

Written along the margin of an old manuscript of homilies, now in the Bodleian Library, was found the fragment of a funeral-song, belonging possibly to the early pagan days. In it Death speaks to Man. Nothing could well be gloomier in tone and more sternly solemn:

For thee was a house built
 Ere thou wast born;
 For thee was a mould shaped
 Ere thou of mother camest.
 Its height is not determined,
 Nor its depth measured,
 Nor is it yet seen

How long it shall be,
Until I bring thee
Where thou shalt be;
Until I measure thee,
And the earth's sod.
Thy house is not
Built highly :
It is un-high and low.
When thou art in it
The heelways are low,
The sideways un-high.
The roof is built
Thy breast full nigh,
So thou shalt in mould
Dwell full cold,
Dim and dark.
Doorless is that house,
Dark is it within.
Detained thou art therein,
Death holds the key.
Loathly is that earth-house,
And grim to dwell in.
In it thou shalt dwell,
And worms shall share thee.
Thus thou art laid
And leavest thy friends.
Thou hast no friend
That will come to thee,
That will ever ask
How that house pleaseth thee;
That will ever open
The door for thee,
And seek thee ;
For soon thou art loathly
And hateful to look upon.

Most of the shorter Anglo-Saxon poems now in existence are preserved in two manuscript collections called the *Exeter Book* and the *Vercelli Book*. The *Exeter Book*, composed of hymns and sacred legends, was arranged by the

bishop of Exeter in the twelfth century and by him presented to the cathedral in that place. The *Vercelli Book*, containing metrical legends of the saints and addresses to the soul, was discovered in 1823 in the monastery of Vercelli, in Italy, where it had doubtless lain unknown for a thousand years.

In both these books are poems written by one Cynewulf, supposed to have been a bishop of Lindisfarne, who died in A.D. 780. Throughout these poems there is a kindliness of tone and a buoyancy of spirit not often met with in the poetry of that period. Nature is viewed in her more gentle aspects, and, where man is spoken of, there are touches of tenderness and fellow-feeling which do much to reconcile us with the prevailing rudeness of the time:

Dear is the welcome guest to the Frisian wife when the vessel strands; his ship is come and her husband to his house, her own provider. And she welcomes him in, washes his weedy garment, and clothes him anew. It is pleasant on shore to him whom his love awaits.

In the *Exeter Book* is also a very old poem, called the *Traveler's Song*, wherein the author enumerates the countries he has visited and speaks of the people he has seen. There are, too, several allegorical poems in which certain facts and crude notions relating to natural objects are made to do duty in the teaching of religious and moral truths. The allegory of the *Phoenix* portrays the life of the earnest Christian. The story of the *Whale* cautions its readers against hypocrisy and the deception of outside appearances:

He calleth the little fishes around him by the sweet odor of his mouth; then suddenly around the prey the grim gums crash together. So it is to every man who often and negligently in this stormy world lets himself be deceived by sweet odor. Hell's barred doors have not return or escape, or any outlet for those who enter, any more than the fishes sporting in the ocean can turn back from the whale's grip.

Besides the poems already named, the *Exeter Book* contains the legend of *Juliana* and a series of short poems on the life of Christ by Cynewulf, an *Address of the Soul to the Body*, and a poem on *The Various Fortunes of Men*. The *Vercelli Book* contains the legend of *St. Elene*, or the finding of the True Cross by the mother of Constantine, the legend of *St. Andrew*, *Addresses of the Soul to the Body*, and a poem on *The Fates of The Apostles*.

Anglo-Saxon verse differs very largely from the verse of English poetry. There is no rhyme, neither are the syllables counted. Its chief characteristic is alliteration. The lines are written in pairs, and the three chief words in a pair usually begin with the same letter; two of these words are placed in the first line and the other in the second. The initial letter of the latter is called the cardinal letter, and the word the *cardinal word*. When the cardinal word begins with a consonant or with a double consonant, as *sp*, *st*, *bl*, etc., the two chief words in the preceding line must begin in the same way. If, however, the cardinal word begins with a vowel, the rule is reversed; the other words must also begin with vowels; but these vowels must not be the same. "The alliterative letters, whether vowels or consonants, must always be found in those words which have the stress or tone on the syllable that begins with them; but a word may commence with a toneless derivative syllable without disturbing the alliteration. It is, moreover, a rule that, in the two connected lines, there must not be more than three words beginning in this manner. The cardinal letter does not necessarily stand first in the second line, but is often preceded by one or more short words, yet not by such as require the tone or emphasis in reading."*

The application of the above rules may be seen in the translation of the first song of Cædmon as rendered on page 19. The following example, taken from Cædmon's *Genesis*, will also illustrate the same rules:

* Rask's *Anglo-Saxon Grammar*.

Satan mathelode ;	sorgiende spræc
se the helle forth	healdan sceolde,
gýman thaes grundes :	wæs ær Godes engel
hwit on heofne,	ôth hine his hyge forspeou
and his ofermetto	ealrâ swithôst,
thaet he ne wolde	weredâ Drihtnes
word wurthian.	Weôl him on innan
hyge ymb his heortan ;	hât waes him utan
wrathlic wite.	

The following is a very literal translation :

Satan spoke ; sorrowing spoke
 he that hell thenceforth should hold
 to keep the ground ; was once God's angel
 white in heaven, till him his mind seduced
 and his pride of all the mightiest,
 that he not the Lord of hosts'
 word should obey. Welled within him
 his mind and heart ; hot was it without,
 wrathful his punishment.

REFERENCES.

THE student should thoroughly acquaint himself with the history of Britain and with the period of Anglo-Saxon domination (449-1066). Most of the following books will be found easily accessible, and will be valuable aids :

- Knight's *History of England*. Vol. I.
- Green's *History of the English People*. Vol. I., Chap. I.
- Hume's *History*. Vol. I.
- Thierry's *Norman Conquest*. Vol. I.
- Turner's *History of the Anglo-Saxons*.
- Palgrave's *History of the Anglo-Saxons*.
- Palgrave's *History of the English Commonwealth*.
- Kemble's *Saxons in England*. (London, 1849.)
- Stubbs's *Constitutional History of England*.

For a more complete study of the literature of this period, the student is referred to

- Conybeare's *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry*.
- Haigh. *The Anglo-Saxon Sagas*. (London, 1861.)

- Morley's *English Writers*. Vol. I. (London, 1867.)
 Morley's *First Sketch of English Literature*.
 Taine's *English Literature*. Vol. I., Chap. I.
 Thorpe's *Beowulf*. (Oxford, 1855.)
 Thorpe's *Cædmon*. (London, 1832.)
 Wackerbarth. *Beowulf Translated into English Verse*. (London, 1849.)
 Hart's *Syllabus of Anglo-Saxon Literature*.
 Hadley's *Brief History of the English Language*, in Webster's Dictionary.
 March's *Anglo-Saxon Grammar and Anglo-Saxon Reader*.
 Carpenter's *Anglo-Saxon Reader*.
 Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Reader*.
 Corson's *Hand-Book of Anglo-Saxon and Early English*.
 Bosworth's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*.

LIGHTER COLLATERAL READING.

- Taylor's *Tragedy of Edwin the Fair*.
 Leighton's *The Sons of Godwin*.
 Tennyson's *Drama of Harold*.
 Bulwer's historical novel, *Harold*.

CHAPTER II.

POETRY OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD.

1066-1362.

Changes in the Anglo-Saxon Language—The Normans—The French Language in England—Formation of the English Language—The Abbey of Cokaygne—The First English Love-Song—Rhyme and Metre—Sing Cuccu—Metrical Version of the Psalms—Geoffrey of Monmouth—Wace—Layamon's Brut—Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle—Robert of Brunne—The Ormulum—Lives of the Saints—Handlyngge of Synne—Hampole's Pricke of Conscience—Vision of Piers Plowman—Other Poems of this Period.

DURING the six centuries which intervened between the Saxon and the Norman conquests of England, there had been, as we have said, but few changes in the language spoken by the English people. True, the invasion of England by the Danes had added a few Scandinavian terms—mostly proper names, however—to the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary. And the use of the Latin language in the services of the church, and the cultivation of the Latin literature in the monasteries, had caused the introduction of a considerable number of Latin derivatives. The superior civilization of the French, too, and the intimate relations existing between England and Normandy for many years previous to the Conquest, had doubtless infused a little of the French character into the Anglo-Saxon tongue. Nevertheless, the vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon literature remained so uniform, that the language, during that period, may be said to have been fixed—as fixed as the English language of to-day. But the three hundred years from 1066 to 1366 was a period of great change; new manners and a new spirit, in mind and speech, were introduced, and a new language was built up. The time during

which the change from the old to the new was being effected, and during which the language was in an imperfect, and to a degree chaotic, condition, we know as the Transition Period. The literature of this period is, as might be inferred, peculiar to the age in which it was produced. There was much versifying and but little real poetry; and of prose—English prose—there was almost none.

The Normans were originally of the same race as the Saxons. A little more than a century previous to their conquest of England, their ancestors, under the leadership of Rollo the Ganger, had settled in Northern France. They had come from Scandinavia, a mere band of pagan adventurers; but they possessed, in a large degree, those qualities of courage and masterly enterprise which soon caused their descendants to be recognized as the foremost people in Europe. They adopted the religion of those among whom they had settled. They learned the French language, and forgot their own. They became polished in manners and refined in taste, and developed a spirit of inquiry and an activity of imagination totally unknown to their Anglo-Saxon neighbors and kinsmen. The conquest of England they accomplished with comparative ease; and they proceeded at once to uproot, if possible, all the cherished institutions of the Anglo-Saxons, and to establish their own instead.

“They would not and could not borrow any idea or custom from such boors; they despised them as coarse and stupid. They stood amongst them, as the Spaniards amongst the Americans in the sixteenth century, superior in force and culture, more versed in letters, more expert in the arts of luxury. They preserved their manners and their speech. England, to all outward appearance,—the court of the king, the castles of the nobles, the palaces of the bishops, the houses of the wealthy,—was French; and the Scandinavian people, of whom sixty years ago the Saxon kings used to have poems sung to them, thought

that the nation had forgotten its language, and treated it in their laws as though it were no longer their sister.”*

For two hundred years the children at school were forbidden to read in their native tongue; but they were obliged first to learn the French, and from the French the Latin language. As would naturally be supposed, the Saxons, neglecting their own books, soon forgot their handwriting, “until,” says Ingulphus, a historian of the time, “few besides the eldest men could understand the characters.” Matthew Paris relates that in the year 1095, Wolstan, bishop of Worcester, was deposed simply from the reason that he was “a superannuated English idiot who could not speak French.” Of course, the laws were all administered in French, but accounts and records were usually written in Latin.

But the old language did not die. It was still the language of the common people, the language of every-day life. In the more remote country districts, the only speech was Saxon. The sturdy Englishman refused to adopt the tongue of the Normans. But, on the other hand, it became very necessary for the Norman to learn English; it was the speech of his Saxon wife; his children learned it from their mother; his tenants and his servants knew no other. “From generation to generation the contagion spreads; they breathe it in the air, with the foresters in the chase, the farmers in the field, the sailors on the ships: for the Saxon people, shut in by their animal existence, are not the kind to learn a foreign language; by the simple weight of their dullness”—firmness, rather—“they impose their idiom upon their conquerors, at all events such words as pertain to living things.” The old language survived, but it had passed through such a metamorphosis that its former individuality could scarcely be recognized.

The English language was not formed, as some assert, by the union of two languages—the Anglo-Saxon and the

* Taine, I., 117.

Norman-French. It is the Anglo-Saxon language, modified, simplified, and perfected. Of the manner in which the old language was converted into the new, Hallam says: "It was effected in three ways: 1, by contracting or otherwise modifying the pronunciation and the orthography of words; 2, by omitting many inflections, especially of the noun, and consequently making more use of articles and auxiliaries; 3, by the introduction of French derivatives. Of these, the second alone, I think, can be considered as sufficient to describe a new form of language; and this was brought about so gradually that we are not relieved of much of our difficulty, whether some compositions shall pass for the latest offspring of the mother, or for the earliest proofs of the fertility of the daughter." In the confusion of speech resulting from the existence of the two languages side by side, the English became careless of genders and inflections. The Normans, seeking to make themselves understood in the language of the conquered, were naturally neglectful of those niceties of inflection, pronunciation, and spelling which had formerly characterized the Anglo-Saxon. At the same time many old words were dropped, and their places taken by the more convenient new terms derived from the rival language. Scholarly speech, abstract and philosophical terms, the language of the law, "in short, all words depending on reflection and culture," find their origin in the Norman-French. But the speech of every-day life, the names of common actions and visible objects, the homely words expressing the passions of the heart—all these are Saxon.

One of the earliest poems of the Transition Period is a satire on the monastic profession. The high-living of the monks is represented in the description of a monastery, every part of which is constructed of some costly or delicious viand:

There is a wel fair abbei
Of white monks and of grei,
Ther beth boures and halles:

All of pasties beth the walles,
 Of fleis of fisse, and rich met
 The likefullist that man mai et.
 Fluren cakes beth the schingles alle
 Of church, cloister, boure, and halle.
 The pinnes beth fat podinges
 Rich met to princes and to kinges.
 In the praer is a tree
 Swithe likeful for to see,
 The rote is gingeur and galingale,
 The siouns beth al sedwale.
 The frute gilofre of gode smakke,
 Of cucubes there nis no lakke.
 There beth four wellis in the abbei
 Of tracle and halwei,
 Of baume and eke piement
 Ever ernend to right rent. . . .
 Though paradis be merri and bright,
 Cokaygne is of fairir sight.

The reader will observe that in this poem and many others belonging to the Transition Period there is no alliteration as in the Anglo-Saxon poems, and that the lines rhyme either consecutively or alternately. The rhythm is very imperfect. It was a favorite custom with the writers of this period to write in trimeters, throwing two lines together, thus:

Jesu for thi muchele might, Thou zef us of thi grace.

In this way, by the careless or sometimes intentional combination of two lines into one, the Alexandrine, or hexameter verse, came into use.

Sometimes several short lines were thrown together like prose. As thus:

A wayle white as whalles bon | a grein of golde that godly
 shon | a tortle that min hart is on | in tonnes trewe | Hire glad-
 ship nes never gon | while y may glewe.

The earliest love-song written in English and still in existence was composed probably about the year 1200. It is preserved in the British Museum. The rhymes are very irregular, and it abounds in alliteration. In the following extract the spelling has been modernized :

Blow, northern wind, send
 Thou me thy sweeting ; blow
 Northern wind, blow, blow, blow.
 She is coral of goodness,
 She is ruby of rich fulness,
 She is crystal of clearness,
 And banner of beauty,
 She is lily of largess,
 She is parnenke pronesse,
 She is salsecle of sweetness
 And lady of lealty.

The following little poem on the coming of spring was written doubtless in the twelfth century, and is rich with the true poetic feeling :

Sumer is i-cumen in,
 Lhude sing, cuccu ;
 Groweth sed, and bloweth med,
 And springeth the wde nu.
 Sing, cuccu, cuccu,
 Awe bleteth after lamb
 Louth after calve cu,
 Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth :
 Murie sing, cuccu,
 Well sings the cuccu,
 Ne swik thou never nu.
 Sing, cuccu, nu,
 Sing, cuccu.

In the Bodleian Library there is a manuscript containing a metrical version of the Psalms, written not later than the thirteenth century. I quote a few verses of the nineteenth psalm :

Hevenes tellen godes blis
And wolken shows hond werk his.
Dai to dai word rise riht,
And wisdom shewes niht to niht,
Of whilke that noht is herde thar steven,
In all the world out yhode thar corde
And in ende of erthe of tham the worde.

But the chief productions of this period were poetical romances and so-called verse-histories, and most of these were written in French. For, not only were the writers Norman, but they wrote for Norman readers. About the year 1150, Geoffrey of Monmouth, a Welsh priest, wrote in Latin prose a history of the British kings. This work purports to relate the story of Britain from the time of Brutus, the great-grandson of Æneas, to the death of Cadwallader, a Welsh king, in 688. Notwithstanding the fabulous character of this story, it attained to a great popularity, and was for a long time the store-house from which the writers of verse-histories drew their material. A Frenchman named Wace (sometimes miscalled Robert Wace or Richard Wace) undertook to popularize the work by translating it into French. He accordingly reproduced it as a French metrical romance, to which he gave the name of the *Brut*. The work consisted of 15,300 lines, and was completed, as appears from the concluding couplet of the poem, in the year 1155. As a matter of course, it was not an exact translation. Sometimes the author adhered pretty closely to his original, sometimes he paraphrased, sometimes he added fresh material or inventions of his own.

An English priest named Layamon, about this time, conceived the idea of constructing, from such materials as he could command, a story in English verse which would be acceptable to his countrymen and understood by them. He accordingly made a long journey in search of the books upon which he intended to found his narrative. These were, first and chiefly, "a book that a French clerk hight Wace made;" second, "the English book that St. Beda

made;" third, two obscure Latin writers, Albinus and Austin; and, no doubt, fourth, Geoffrey of Monmouth's fabulous history. When he returned home with these books and made ready to begin his work, as he says, "Layamon laid them down and turned the leaves; may the Lord be merciful to him!" And the result was the most important literary production of the Transition Period.

Layamon's *Brut* contains 32,250 lines, and nearly twice as much matter as its prototype, Wace's *Brut*. The story commences with the destruction of Troy and the flight of Æneas, and extends to the reign of Athelstan, king of Anglo-Saxon England. Some of the less important passages of Wace are omitted, and their place is supplied by additions from other authorities, or from Layamon's own fancy, or from his personal knowledge of British tradition. The portions thus added are the finest parts of the work, and the only parts, in fact, which possess any special poetical merit. The versification is exceedingly irregular. Sometimes it is the unrhymed alliterative measure peculiar to Anglo-Saxon poetry, then it is rhymed like its French model; sometimes the lines are divided into regular feet, sometimes they are merely rhythmical after the manner of Anglo-Saxon verse. This irregularity in the structure of the poem has led some to suppose that it is not the work of a single author, but rather a patchwork constructed by many hands. But the unity of design running through the entire poem, and the close connection between the parts, render this supposition highly improbable. In the English of the poem we discover the first marked differences in grammatical structure, the carelessness in the use of inflections, and many other of those changes which led soon to the complete development of the new language. We have the poem in two manuscripts, one written early in the thirteenth century, and the other some fifty years later. In the second manuscript many changes have been made, but the language in both is essentially the Anglo-Saxon as it then existed in the rural districts among

the common people. In the earlier manuscript, with its 32,250 lines, there are not more than fifty words of Norman derivation.

To give the student some further notion of the character of this poem, of its language and peculiar structure, we quote a short passage wherein the author describes the flight of Childric to the forest of Caledon. The first column exhibits the oldest known text, written during Layamon's own time; the second is from the later manuscript:

Nis hit a nare boc idiht
that aeure weore aei fiht
ine thissere Bruttene
that balu weore swa riue.
for volken him was aermest
that aeure com at aerde,
there wes muchel blod gute
balu wes on folke
daeth ther wes rife
the eorthe ther dunede.
Childrich the kaisere
haefde aenne castel here,
a Lincolnes felde,
ther he lai with innen,
the wes neuwen iworlt
& swithe wel biwust.
& there weoren mid him,
Baldolf and Colgrim,
and isegen that heore uole
faie-sih worhte,
& heo forth riht anon
on mid heore burnen
and flugen ut of castle
kenscipe bidaled,
and flugen forth riht anan
to the wude of Calidon.

Nis hit in none boke idiht
that eure her was soch fiht
in thissere Brutaine
there sleaht were so riue.

thar was mochel blod igote.

death thar was riue.

Childrich the kayser
hadde one castel her,
a Lyncolnes felde
thar he lay with ine,
he was newene iworlt
and swithe wel he was idiht.
And thar weren mid him
Baldolf and Colgrim
and isehge that hire folke
folle to grunde.
And hii forth riht anon
an mid hire brunies
and flogen ut of castle
kenscipe bi-dealed
and flogen forthriht anan
to than wode of Calidon.

The following is a literal translation :

In no book is it written
that ever there was such fight
in this Britain ;
the mischief was so rife

for the people it was the most miserable
 that ever came to earth ;
 there was much blood-shed,
 mischief was among the folk,
 death there was rife,
 the earth resounded.
 Childrich the emperor,
 had a castle there
 in Lincoln's field,
 where he lay within,
 that was new built
 and very well arranged,
 and there were with him
 Baldolf and Colgrim,
 and they saw that their people
 destruction seized.
 And they forthright alone
 on with their burnies
 and fled out of the castle,
 of courage deprived,
 and fled forthright onwards
 to the wood of Caledon.

Another verse-history something similar in general character to Layamon's *Brut*, but written more than a century afterwards, and of far greater value as a real contribution to the history of England, is the rhyming chronicle of Robert of Gloucester. It extends from the siege of Troy to the death of Henry III., in 1272; and, though it is largely made up from the fables and legends of Geoffrey of Monmouth, it contains many trustworthy facts relating to the country and the people of England in the thirteenth century.

The following lines, wherein the author describes the sports and ceremonies following the coronation of King Arthur, will serve to illustrate the style in which the poem is written :

The kyng was to ys paleys
 tho the servyse was ydo,

Ylad with his menye
 and the quene to hire also.
 For hii hulde the olde usages,
 that men wyth men were
 By them sulve, and wymmen
 by hem sulve also there
 Tho hii were echone ysett,
 as yt to her stat bycom,
 Kay, king of Aungeo,
 a thousand knytes nome
 Of noble men, yclothed
 in ermyne echone
 Of on sywete, and servede
 at thys noble fest anon.
 Bedwer the botyler
 kyng of Normandye,
 Nom also in ys half
 a vayr companye
 Of one swyte, wortto, servy
 of the botelerye.
 Byvore the quene yt was also
 of al suche cortesy, e,
 For to telle al the noblye
 that ther was ydo,
 They my tongue were of stel,
 me ssolde not dure thereto.
 Wymmen ne kepte of no kyngt
 as in druery,
 Bote he were in armys wel yproved,
 and atte leste thrye.
 Sone after thys noble mete,
 as ryght was of such ryde,
 The knyghts atyled hem aboute
 in eche syde,
 In feldys and in medys
 to prove her bachelerye.
 Somme wyth lance, some wyth suerd,
 withoute vylenye
 With pleyng at tables,
 other atte chekere.

The following on the geography of England is more interesting :

In the contre of Canterbury mest plente of fysch ys.
 And mest chase about Salesburi of wylde bestes y wys,
 At London schippes mest, & wyn at Wyncestre.
 At Herford schep and orf, & fruyt at Wircestre.
 Sope aboute Covyntre, yrn at Gloucestre.
 Metel, as led and tin, in the contre of Excestre.
 Euerwik of fairest wood, Lyncolne of fayrest men,
 Grantbrugge and Hontyndone mest plente of dup fen.
 Ely of fairest place, of fairest sigte Roucestre.
 Eune ageyn Fraunce stond the contre of Chichestre,
 Norwich ageyn Denemarc, Chestre ageyn Yrlond,
 Duram ageyn Norwei, as ich onderstonde.
 Thre wondres ther beth in Engolonde, none more y not.
 That water of Bathe ys that on, that ever ys yliche hot. . . .
 Upon the pleyn of Salesbury that other wonder ys,
 That Stonehyngel ys yclepud, no more wonder nys.
 . . . The thridde wonder ys
 Up the hul of the pek. North wynd ther, y wys,
 Out of the erthe oft cometh, of holes as yt were,
 And bloweth up of thilke holes, so that it wolde a rere
 And bere up grete clothes, gef heo were ther ney,
 And blowe hem here and there upon the lofte on hey.

The last of the rhyming chronicles or verse-histories is that written by Robert Manning, or, as he is sometimes called, Robert of Brunne. His work, like Layamon's, is, in great part, a translation, being derived from the French of Peter Langtoft, and it was finished about the year 1330. His language approaches much more nearly to our present English :

Lordynges that be now here,
 If ye will listene and lere
 All the storey of Inglande
 Als Robert Mannyng wryten it fand,
 And on Inglysch has it schewed,
 Not for the lerid bot for the lewed

For tho that in this land wonn
 That the Latyn ne Frankys conn,
 For to hauf solace and gamen,
 For felauschipe when tha sitt samen ;
 And it is wysdom for to wyttē
 The state of the land, and haf it wryten,
 What manere of folk first it wan,
 And of what kynde it first began ;
 And gude it is for many thinges
 For to here the dedis of kynges,
 Whilk were foles and whilk were wyse
 And whilk of them couth most quantyse ;
 And whilk did wrong and whilk did ryght,
 And whilk mayntened pes and fyght.
 Of thare dedes shal be mi sawe,
 In what tyme and of what law,
 I shall you tell, from gre to gre,
 Sen the tyme of Sir Noe,
 Fro Noe unto Eneas,
 And what betwix tham was,
 And fro Eneas tille Brutus tyme
 That kynde he telles in this ryme.
 Fro Brutus till Cadwaladres,
 The last Bryton that this lands lees.

One of the most peculiar but one of the most valuable of the literary remains of this period is the *Ormulum*, a poem written about the year 1250. In its language it shows a degree of advancement about midway between Layamon's *Brut* and Robert Manning's *Chronicle*. Only fragments, consisting altogether of about 20,000 lines, are in existence. The poem is a metrical paraphrase of the gospels, a certain portion being set apart for each day in the year, and accompanied by a metrical homily borrowed largely from Ælfric and Bede. The author was Ormin or Orm, an Augustine monk, and the poem he named after himself, saying:

Thiss boc iss nemmedd Orrmulum
 Forrthi thatt Orm itt wrohhte.

The principal peculiarity of the poem is the manner in which the words are spelled. After short vowels, Orm invariably doubles the consonant, except in a few cases where for want of room to write the two consonants he places a semi-circular mark over the vowel. He has apparently taken great pains with his spelling, and he cautions all copyists to adhere scrupulously to the methods he has adopted. But it is not probable that his book was ever copied, the existing manuscript being, without doubt, the original of the author himself.

The following passage selected from his homily on Christ's temptation in the wilderness will serve as a specimen of this curious poem :

Forrthriht se Jesuss fullhtnedd wass,
 He wennde himm intill wesste.
 The Goddspell seggth thatt he was ledd
 Thurrh Gast inntill the wesste,
 Annd tatt forr thatt he sholde thaer
 Beon fandedd thurrh the deofell
 & Crist bilaef i westeland,
 Forr thatt he wollde fasstenn,
 & he toc tha to fassten thaer
 Thaer he wass i the wesste.
 & all withthutenn mete & drinnch
 Heold Crist hiss fasste thaere
 Fowwerrtig daghess agg onnan
 Bi daghess, & bi nahhtess.
 & whanne hiss fasste forthedd wass
 Tha lisste himm affterr fode;
 & forrthi comm the lathe gast,
 Forr thatt he wollde himm fandenn,
 & lett himm staness seon anan,
 & seggde thus withth worde;
 Giff thatt tu Godess Sune arrt wiss,
 Macc braed of thise staness.
 & ure Laferrd Jesu Crist
 Gaff sware onngaen & seggde;

Boc seggth thatt nohht ne magg the mann
 Bi braed all ane libbenn,
 Acc bi thatt word tatt cumethth ut
 Off Godess muthess lare.

Among the religious poems of this period, we should not forget a volume of the *Lives of the Saints*, translated from the French about the year 1200. It relates chiefly to those saints who are more directly connected with the religious traditions of England,—as Saint Swithin, Saint Cuthbert, Saint Wölstan, Saint Thomas à Becket, and others. The following description of Saint Christopher is a fair specimen of both the thought and the language employed in this series of poems:

Seynt Cristofer was a Sarazin in the londe
 of Canaan,
 And no stud by him daye mi fonde
 non so strong a man ;
 Ffour and twenti fecte he was longe,
 and thikk and brod inouh,
 Such a mon but he weare stronge
 methinketh hit weare wouh :
 A' la cuntre where he was
 for him wolde fleo,
 Therefore hym ythoughte that no man
 ageinst him sculde beo.
 He seide he wolde with no man beo,
 but with on that were
 Hext lord of all men and undir hym
 non othir were.

Another religious work of this period is the *Handlyngge of Synne*, written by the same Robert Manning of Brunne, whose rhyming chronicle we have already noticed. It is a free translation or, rather, paraphrase of the French *Manuel des Péchés* of one William of Waddington. Its purpose was to give religious instruction through the medium of attractive stories relating to the seven deadly

sins, the seven sacraments, the ten commandments, and the twelve graces of shrift. We learn from the prologue that it was written about the year 1303, and that it was designed to be sung to the harp at public entertainments. "The whole is a curious admixture of paraphrases of Scripture, stories of dreams, omens, witchcraft, warnings against drunkenness and sabbath-breaking, lying and slandering, and all the other shortcomings to which mankind has been and perhaps ever will be prone." The following couplets selected from this work will never lose their wisdom or truth :

" Tavern is the devil's knife,
It slays thee—either soul or life."

" Love not thy children out of wit;
Trust to them, and helpless sit!"

" Dances, carols, summer games,—
Of many such come many shames."

One of the latest works of this period, and one wherein the close of this era of transition is clearly foreshadowed, is the *Pricke of Conscience*, written by Richard Rolle de Hampole, better known as Hampole, from the priory where he lived, and where he died in 1349. The poem is a long one, and is divided into seven parts: I. Of man's nature; II. Of the world; III. Of death; IV. Of purgatory; V. Of the day of judgment; VI. Of the torments of hell; VII. Of the joys of heaven. Like so many other poems of this time, it is doubtless a translation, not from the French, however, but from the Latin. Its original was a prose dissertation, *Stimulus Conscientiæ*, supposed to have been written also by Hampole. The author says :

Therefore this boke is in Englis drawe
Of fele matters that bene unknowe
To lewd men that are unkunnand

That con no latyn understande,
 To make themselves first know
 And from sin and vanities them draw.

The following is a specimen of Hampole's style:

He that knoweth well and con se
 What he is, was, and schal be,
 A wiser man may be told,
 Whethur he be young or old,
 Then he that con al other thing
 And of hymself hath no knowing;
 He may no good knowe ny fele
 Bot he furst knowe hym selven wele.
 Therefore a mon schulde furst lere
 To know hymself properly here
 Ffor yif he knewe hymself kyndely
 Then may he knowe god almighty.

Four centuries later we shall find Alexander Pope giving expression in more studied metres to the same thought.*

As belonging also to the Transition Period, we shall here notice a celebrated allegorical poem called the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, written by Robert or William Langland about the year 1362. It marks the last attempt towards restoring the alliterative versification and the stilted, constrained style of the Anglo-Saxon poets. The poem is divided into twenty parts, and describes a series of nine distinct dreams or visions which the author is supposed to have seen while sleeping after a long ramble on Malverne-hills, in Worcestershire:

In a somer seson
 When soft was the sonne,
 I shope me in shroudes,
 As I a shepe were,

* "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
 The proper study of mankind is Man."

Essay on Man, II., 1, 2.

In habit as an heremite,
 Unholy of werkes,
 Went wide in this world
 Wonders to here.
 Ac on a May morning
 On Maluerne hulles
 Me byfel a ferly
 Of fairy methought;
 I was wery forwandered
 And went me to reste
 Under a brode banke
 By a bornes side,
 And as I lay and lened
 And loked in the wateres
 I slombered in a slepyng,
 It sweyved so merye."

In Langland's time, as often before and since, there was much wrong-doing in the world, and his poem was intended as a satire on the vices of every profession, but particularly on the corruption of the clergy. The satire is disguised under the form of an allegory in which are personified the virtues and the prevalent vices of the time. In his first dream, Langland sees a fair field full of folk, and among them is the maid Meed, or worldly reward, who is about to be married to Falsehood. Theology forbids the marriage, and the question is submitted to the king, who proposes an alliance between Meed and Conscience. Conscience says:

Crist it me forbede!
 Er I wedde swich a wife,
 Wo me bitide!
 For she is frele of hire feith
 Fikele of hire speche,
 And maketh men mysdo
 Many score tymes;
 Trust of hire tresor
 Bitrayeth ful manye.

Afterwards, however, he agrees to submit the matter to the decision of Reason, and the king finally announces that he will henceforth govern his kingdom according to Reason's dictates.

At this point the author "waked of his wynking," and would have continued his rambling; but still feeling fatigued, he

sat softly a-down
And seide his bileve,
And so he bablede on his bedes,
Thei broughte him a-slepe.

This time he dreams that Reason is preaching to the "feld ful of folk," telling them that the pestilence and the southwest wind, on Saturday evening,* were sent to warn them of their vanity and sin. The multitude of sinners, urged on by Repentance and Hope, now set out together on a pilgrimage to find Truth. A pilgrim whom they meet and of whom they inquire the way, is thus described:

He bar a burdoun y-bounde
With a brood liste,
In a withwynde wise
Y-wounden aboute;
A holle and a bagge
He bar by his syde,
And hundred of ampulles (phials),
On his hat seten
Signes of Synay,
And shells of Galice,
And many a crouch on his cloke,
And keyes of Rome,

* Tyrwhitt is of the opinion that the poet here refers to the memorable storm of wind which passed over England on January 15, 1362, which day was Saturday. It is from this passage, and two others referring nearly to the same date, that the time of the writing of the poem has been determined.

And the vernycle before,
For men sholde knowe
And se bi hise signes
Whom he sought hadde.

But this pilgrim, notwithstanding his experience as a traveler, does not know the way to Truth—indeed, he has never heard of her. Then suddenly Piers the Plowman, the type of the meek and pure-hearted to whom God has promised the kingdom, appears for the first time. He says that he knows the way as well as a clerk knows his books; and the wanderers at once put themselves under his direction. He gives them employment, plowing and sowing a half-acre by the roadside; but at length, becoming dissatisfied with this practical mode of searching for Truth, they rebel, and are subdued only by the aid of Hunger.

The visions which follow are similar in character, introducing new personifications of vices and virtues, and satirizing at every turn the abuses and corruptions so prevalent in that age. Finally, the humble plowman is identified with Christ, who came as one meek and lowly to guide an erring world. The poet then describes Christ's passion, his descent into hell, the foundation of the church, the opposition of the world, and the coming of Anti-Christ. At the end, the stronghold of the church is attacked by an army of priests and monks, and Conscience, deserted and almost despairing, cries out for help. But no one hearing, he takes a pilgrim's staff in his hand, and sets out to wander over the world, resolved that he will not cease or falter "till he have Piers the Plowman."

I will give but one more quotation from this poem, a passage which has been regarded by some as a prophecy of the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII.:

And there shall come a king,
and confess your religions,

And bete you as the bible telleth,
for breking of your rule:
And amende moniales
monks and chanoines.
And then friers in her freytor
shall fynd a key
Of Constantyne's coffers,
in which is the catal
That Gregories godchyldren
had it dispended.
And than shall the abot of Abingdon,
and al his issue for evere,
Have a knocke of a kyng,
And incurable the wound.

In this remarkable poem, wherein are sketched with a master's hand the dangers which beset the commonwealth, and the rank sores which festered in the body social and politic, the author no doubt expressed the opinions which thousands had already felt. And his book, by reason of thus touching a sympathetic chord in the minds of his contemporaries, proved to be the greatest "literary success" that had yet appeared in English literature. Numerous copies of the work were made, and a considerable number of manuscripts of different dates still exist, attesting the popularity of the poem.

Prof. Corson says: "The reader who does not throw it aside *at first* will hardly do so afterwards; and so it must ever be with the works of a true poet when once the mind is attuned to his thoughts and feelings. The extreme earnestness of the author and the obvious truthfulness and blunt honesty of his character are in themselves attractive and lend a value to all he utters, even when he is evolving a theory or wanders into abstract questions of theological speculation. But we are the more pleased when we perceive, as we very soon do, that he is evidently of a *practical* turn of mind, and loves best to exercise his shrewd English common sense upon topics of every-day interest."

Of the other poetical productions of the Transition Period, we shall here but mention the names of a few of the most important. Among the numerous romances the most notable are those relating to King Arthur and his mythical knights, the story of *Richard Cœur de Lyon*, the *Geste of King Horn*, *Havelok the Dane*, and others, which will be treated of more fully in the chapter on poetical romances. *The Owl and the Nightingale* is the title of an allegory in which the two birds are represented as disputing about their respective powers of song. *The Body and the Soul* is a dialogue in verse, supposed to have been written by Walter Map. Besides these, there were numerous ballads popular among the common people, and preserved mainly by oral tradition and by the bards or minstrels, who recited them to the accompaniment of the harp. These, with some war lyrics written by Lawrence Minot, will be duly noticed hereafter.

In the same year in which Langland wrote *Piers Plowman*, the English language was authorized to be used in the courts of law, and the Transition Period, it may be said, came to an end. From that time we may date the beginning of the English language as we now know it. Of course, it did not suddenly assume the form and the perfection which it now possesses, nor did it do away entirely with the provincial dialects or with the French influences at court. But it stood forth henceforward as the literary language of England, to a measure fixed in character, and yet constantly progressive.

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LIGHTER COLLATERAL READING.

Ivanhoe, by Sir Walter Scott.

CHAPTER III.

POETICAL ROMANCES.

The Romance Language—Troubadours and Trouvères—Geste of King Horne—Havelok the Dane—Romances of Richard Cœur de Lion—Romance of Alexander—The Legend of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table—Walter Map—The Romance of Arthur—Numerous Early Versions—Arthur in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*—Milton, Dryden, Blackmore, Lord Lytton—Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*—The Literary Revolution of the Eighteenth Century—Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*—*Marmion*—The *Lady of the Lake*—The *Lord of the Isles*—Lord Byron—The *Giaour*—The *Corsair*—The *Bride of Abydos*—The *Siege of Corinth*—*Lalla Rookh*, by Thomas Moore—The *Loves of the Angels*—Morris's *Sigurd the Volsung*.

ROMANCES are so called, from the fact that the earliest specimens of their kind were written in the Romance language—a language resulting from the union of the Latin with the Teutonic and Celtic dialects of France and Spain. From the middle of the tenth to the middle of the thirteenth century an extensive and unique literature flourished in France. In the southern provinces this literature assumed the lyric form, and the writers of its poetry were called Troubadours. In the north, as might have been expected from the character of the people, the poetical productions were usually of a narrative character. The writers of these metrical stories were called Trouvères; and the name Romance or Romans was early applied to their stories. The word Trouvère as well as the word Troubadour means a finder or inventor, as the word poet means a maker, and skald a polisher. The influence which the Trouvères and Troubadours have had upon the development and the character of English literature is not generally well understood. It was their works, doubtless, which gave an impulse to the literary movement of the Transition Period.

in England; and to them we are indebted for the models and the materials for a very large portion of the lyrics and romances of subsequent times. Of the love-poetry and the lively satiric effusions of the Troubadour literature we shall speak in another chapter.

The metrical romances of the Trouvères probably took their rise from the historical odes sung in pagan times by the Scandinavian bards; for the Normans, we should remember, were of the Scandinavian stock, and had but recently abandoned paganism. Be this as it may, however, they seem to have discarded their ancient heroes as well as their ancient faith, and to have sought the subjects of their songs in the histories and traditions of Greece and Rome, and of Britain. At the time of the Conquest some of the most popular Trouvère romances had already been composed. Wace, in his *Roman du Rou*, says that in the battle of Hastings a certain *jongleur* named "Taillefer, who sang very well, rode before the duke upon a horse which quickly went, and he sang of Charlemagne, and of Roland, and of Oliver and his vassals who died at Roncevaux."

The Normans not only carried with them into England the knowledge of the Trouvère romances so popular in their own country, but they found there the materials for new songs and poems. From the Saxon bards and gleemen they learned the story of King Horn and Rimenhild, of Havelok the Dane, of Guy of Warwick, and of numerous heroes of Celtic and Saxon legend; and forthwith they dressed these stories in the garb of French romance, adding to or taking from the original as best suited their fancy or convenience. Soon, however, the English language having gained strength and popularity in England in spite of its attempted proscription, there came a demand for English books. But, as we have learned in the preceding chapter, the demand was chiefly for translations, and not many original works were written in the vernacular. The object of these translations was doubtless to place in the reach of the unlearned and humbler classes, who

knew only English, those works which had attained a high degree of popularity among their educated Norman rulers.

One of the oldest romances of the class above mentioned is the *Geste of King Horn*, rendered into English during the reign of Henry III. The story is of Scandinavian origin, but whether it was brought to England during the time of the Danish invasion, or to France with the Norse vikings; we cannot say. In either case the author of the poem has added many scenes and incidents derived from his knowledge of feudalism and the crusades. Mury, king of the Saracens, having conquered the kingdom of Suddene and murdered its king, seizes upon Prince Horn, a beautiful boy of fifteen and heir to the throne, and sets him adrift in a boat with two of his playfellows, Achulph and Fykenild. The vessel is driven upon the coast of Westernesse, the boys are rescued, and Horn becomes the page of King Aylmer. Being brave and handsome, he is dubbed a knight, and the Princess Rimenhild falls in love with him and declares her passion, and they are betrothed. Then, according to the custom of chivalry, he leaves the princess for seven years, in order to demonstrate by his noble deeds his worthiness of her affection. At the end of that time, having recovered his native land from the infidel, he returns to Westernesse and finds that Rimenhild has been carried off by his treacherous friend Fykenild. Disguised as a harper, he goes to Fykenild's castle, kills him, and carries Rimenhild in triumph to his own country, where he reigns with her in great splendor and prosperity.

The *Lay of Havelok the Dane* was of similar origin. It was translated into English towards the close of the thirteenth century. Havelok, a young prince, is in danger of death at the hands of a usurper named Godard, but is saved by a fisherman named Grim. Sailing across the sea with the fisherman and his family, he lands at a place in England called, in honor of his preserver, Grimsby. There he enters the service of a usurping earl named Godrich, who holds in captivity a Princess Goldeburgh. The earl

promises to wed the princess to the strongest man in England; but, after Havelok has proven himself to be that man, he treacherously refuses to keep his promise. Then the story relates how Havelok, after a series of adventures, overcomes both the usurpers, and how he and Goldeburgh ruled thereafter sixty years in England. There must have been some historical truth connected with this legend, as in the town of Grimsby there is to this day a street named Havelok; and a stone marking the boundary between Grimsby and the adjoining parish has from time immemorial been called Havelok stone.

One would think that had there been any capacity for original composition, or any poetical genius among the English people of that period, they might have found in the adventures of King Richard Cœur de Lion ample materials for an original English poem. But such was not the case. Although the exploits of Richard are made the theme of more than one poem, they are never related in English at first-hand. Like the other romances of the period, they are translated from the French. The following passage is extracted from one of these translations made about the middle of the fourteenth century:

Lordynges, herkens beforne,
 How Kyng Rychard was borne,
 His fadyr hyghte Kyng Henry.
 In his tyme, sykyrly,
 Als I fynde in my sawe,
 Seynt Thomas was i-slawe;
 At Cantyrbury at the awter-stone,
 Wher many myraclys are i-don.
 When he was twenty wynter olde,
 He was a kyng swythe bolde,
 He wolde no wyff, I undyrstonde,
 With grete tresore tho he her fonde.
 Nevyrtheless hys barons hym sedde,
 That he graunted a wyff to wedde.
 Hastely he sent his sonde,

Into manye diverse londes,
 The feyreste wyman that wore on liff
 Men wolde bringe hym to wyff.
 Messangeres were redy dyght;
 To shyp they went that ylke nyght.
 Anon the sayl up thay drowgh,
 The wynd hem servyd wel inowgh,
 Whenne they came on mydde the sea
 Another shyp they countryd thoo;
 All it was whyt of huel-bon,
 And every nayl with gold begrave;
 Of pure gold was the stave;
 Her mast was yvory;
 Of samyte the sayl wytterly:
 Her ropes were of tuely sylk,
 All so whyt as ony mylk.
 That noble shyp was al withoute,
 With clothys of golde spred aboute,
 And her loof and her wyndas,
 Of asure forsothe it was.*

One of the most fertile subjects for romance-poetry was the life and exploits of King Alexander. In the year 1060 a Greek scholar in the palace of Antiochus at Constantinople had written a long poem on the *Life and Actions of Alexander the Macedonian*. The work was soon translated into Latin, and from that into French and Italian; and from these latter many English translations and paraphrases were made. In the reign of John, a French version of the *Romance of Alexander* was composed, containing altogether about 20,000 twelve-syllabled lines, since known, from their use in that poem, as Alexandrines. An English translation of this poem was made about the middle of the fourteenth century.

In a former chapter we have spoken of the fabulous *Historia Britonum* of Geoffr y of Monmouth. Geoffr y's work was not so much a history as a collection of the ancient

* Weber: *Metrical Romances*. Vol. II.

traditions of Britain, embellished no doubt to a considerable degree by materials drawn directly from the fertile imagination of the author. Be that as it may, he it was who first brought to the notice of literary men the story of Arthur, and the old British legends which cluster around that mythical king and his "knights of the round table." There is no doubt but that the Arthurian myth, as it existed in a crude and imperfect form among the Celts on both sides of the channel, had long been known to the Trouvères. But Geoffrey's version of the story inspired many persons with a desire to translate it into the French, and some to paraphrase it into a metrical romance. Among these were Lucès de Gast, Walter Map, archdeacon of Oxford; Robert de Borron, and Rusticien de Pise. From various French prose versions the Trouvères and other poets drew the materials for their poems.

It was Walter Map who first conceived the idea of arranging all the different legends relating to Arthur into one harmonious whole. And, to lend a kind of spiritual significance to the story, he determined to associate with it the favorite Christian legend of the Holy Graal. Accordingly, in conjunction with Robert de Borron, he produced a series of five prose romances.

The first was the *Romance of the Holy Graal*, or, as it is sometimes called, *The Romance of Joseph of Arimathea*; the second was the story of *Merlin*; the third, the *Romance of Lancelot of the Lake*; the fourth was the *Romance of the Quest of the Holy Graal*; and the fifth, the *Mort Artus*, the death of Arthur. Soon after this, Lucès de Gast and Helie de Borron added to the series the story of *Sir Tristram and the fair Isolt*; and Chretien de Troyes produced a metrical version of *Erec and Enid* and the romance of *Perceval de Gallois*. The story of the renowned Arthur, as related in this series of romances, is briefly as follows:

The Holy Graal was the dish which contained the paschal lamb at the Last Supper. It was presented by Pilate to Joseph of Arimathea, who, at the taking down of

the Saviour from the cross, used the dish to receive the gore from his wounds. Thus made doubly holy, it became a possession of inestimable value. For forty-and-two years it was the solace of Joseph in prison, keeping him from hunger and pain. Upon his release, he carried the holy vessel with him to Britain, where it was deposited for safe keeping in the treasury of a king called the Fisher-King. Merlin was a magician—"a barbarian compound of madman and poet, of prophet and bard." He was represented as the son of a fiend who knew things past, present, and to come. "But our Lord took him to his own use on account of the mother's repentance; and, instead of being an instrument in the devil's hands to work men mischief, he becomes a preacher and tells of the loving of Jesus Christ."* The story relates that King Vortigern, being in danger of an attack from the Saxons, determined to build a strong castle in Wales. But, although he and his knights and workmen labored hard, they could make no progress; for no matter how strong they built, that which they built in the day-time fell down at night. Sages and men practiced in witchcraft were called upon to try their enchantments, but all to no avail. At length one stood up and said that he had discovered the remedy. A male child who never had father must be found, his breast must be opened, and the blood flowing from the wound must be mingled with the lime, and then the walls will stand to the end of the world. Messengers were at once sent out. Finding Merlin, who, being the son of a fiend, was unable to explain his parentage, they conducted him at once to King Vortigern. He had no trouble in explaining why the walls fell down. He commanded the king to dig deeper into the earth until he should find a stone; under the stone was water, and, when the water was drained off, two dragons were discovered, whose fighting during the night always caused the walls to tumble. Then Merlin fore-

* W. D. Nash : *Merlin the Enchanter and Merlin the Bard*, p. 1.

told to Vortigern the coming of Arthur: "Uther shall have a son who shall come out of Cornwall; he shall be like a wild boar bristled with steel, and shall consume cities and devour the traitors with authority. He shall kill all thy rich kindred; he shall be most brave and noble in thought; to Rome shall his authority extend, and he shall fell all his foes to the ground."* After this we are told of a great battle on Salisbury Plain between Uther and Pendragon on one side and the Saxon invaders on the other. Pendragon is slain, and is buried at the place now called Stonehenge, "and those mighty stones—the wonder of every age—which Merlin ordained to endure to the world's end" were brought by the potent charms of the magician from Ireland, and placed in their position over his grave. And now the story of the Round Table comes in. There were at different times three tables: the first was the one at which the Last Supper was eaten; the second was made by Joseph of Arimathea, and upon it was placed the Holy Graal; the third was made by Uther in accordance with directions from Merlin and in the name of the Trinity. This was set up at Cardwell, in Wales, and the feasting around it was the occasion of great events. Among the noble company who were accustomed to sit at this table were Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall, and his fair wife Igera. Uther becoming enamored of the lady was enabled, through the assistance of the magician Merlin, to visit her in her castle, disguised as her husband Gorlois. Their son was Arthur, who, as soon as he was born, was given into the care of Merlin to be cared for and educated. The boy was kept in ignorance of his high descent until the death of Uther. Then he was crowned, and after reigning many years was married to Guinevere, "the fairest woman in the land." Having obtained the enchanted table which had been set up at Cardwell, he founded a new order of knighthood called that of the Round Table, and among the noble

* Layamon's *Brut*, II., 250.

knights were Sir Launcelot of the Lake, Sir Tristram of Lyonesse, Sir Gawain, Sir Mordred, Sir Galahad, Sir Percivale, and others. All these having vowed to live uprightly, to deal justly, and to preserve their souls in purity, sat at their festival, with the Holy Ghost in their midst, leaving one seat vacant as that which the Lord had occupied, and which was reserved for that one of them which was without sin. This seat was called the Seat Perilous, and whatever impure man sat thereon was swallowed up by the earth. The Holy Graal which Joseph of Arimathea had so long ago brought to Britain had disappeared, and on its recovery depended the honor and peace of the country. But, being visible only to pure eyes, none of the knights succeeded in the quest save Sir Galahad, and to him was awarded the honor of sitting in the Seat Perilous. Of the wonderful series of exploits, of the adventures at home and abroad of these heroes, and of the various episodes so skillfully woven into the narrative, our space will not permit us to speak. The story ends by relating the treason of Sir Mordred, who allies himself with the invading Saxons. A great battle is fought in Cornwall on the river Camlan, and Arthur is slain at the hands of the traitor. But a company of fairies bear him away

“To the island valley of Avilion ;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns,
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,”*

whence, in the fullness of time, says the legend, he shall come again to give the Britons victory over their foes.

The legends of Arthur and his knights have for the last six centuries been the subject of numberless poems, dramas, and romances. And these, with the various discussions and treatises relating to the Arthurian myth, would form

* Tennyson : *The Passing of Arthur*.

almost a literature within themselves. We have space to mention only a few.

Besides the fragments and translations belonging clearly to the Transition Period, there are a metrical romance entitled *La Mort Arthure*, supposed to have been written in the fifteenth century; *Sir Launfal*, a metrical romance translated from the French by Thomas Chestre; *The Romance of Merline*, in nine parts; the story *Of Arthour and of Merline*, a very old poem in MS.; *Gawan and Gologras*, printed at Edinburgh in 1508; *Sir Gawan and Sir Galaron of Galloway*, written perhaps in the time of Henry VI. The Early English Text Society has recently printed, with notes and critical commentaries, several of the earlier Arthurian manuscripts. Among these we will mention :

Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight (from the unique MS.), 1360. Edited by Dr. R. Morris.

The Morte Arthure (from the Thornton MS.), 1440. Edited by G. C. Perry.

Arthur and Merlin (from the unique MSS.), 1440. Edited by Furnivall and Wheatley.

Lancelot of the Laik, 1500. Edited by Skeat.

The best known among the prose versions of the Arthurian legends is *A Book of the noble Hystoryes of Kyng Arthur, and of certayn of his Knyghtes, reduced into Englyshe by Syr Thomas Malory, knyght*. It is a translation from several French romances, and was printed by Caxton in 1489.

A similar translation is that of Lord Berners, entitled *The Hystory of the Most Noble and Valiant Knight, Arthur of Lytel Brytayne*. It was written about the year 1500.

So popular were these romances at the beginning of the sixteenth century, that, if we believe good Roger Ascham, they composed almost the entire reading-matter of the people. He says :

"No thinge was read at that time but bookes of fayned chevalrie, wherein a man by readinge should be led to none other ende, but onely to manslaughter and baudrye. If anye man suppose they were goode enough to passe the

time withal, he is deceived. These bookes (as I have heard say) were made the most part in abbayes and monasteries, a very likely and fit fruite of such ydle and blind kind of lyving. . . . This is good stuff for wise men to laugh at or honest men to take pleasure at, yet I know when God's Bible was banished the court and *La Morte d'Arthur* received into the prince's chamber."*

The poet Spenser in his *Faerie Queene* has chosen King Arthur as the hero of his poem and the type of all manly virtues, "as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many men's former workes, and also furthest from the daunger of envy and suspicion of present time."

Lord Bacon, in 1587, assisted in the representation of a tragedy at Greenwich entitled *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, written by Thomas Hughes, of Gray's Inn. The play was remodeled by Richard Hathaway, and again acted in 1598.

John Milton, while searching for the subject for a great poem, decided at first upon that of *Arthur*, but afterwards changed it for that of *Paradise Lost*. John Dryden, in 1691, wrote an opera entitled *King Arthur*, which he dedicated to Lord Halifax. Four years afterwards Sir Richard Blackmore published his so-called epic on the same subject. In 1848 Lord Lytton published his poem, *King Arthur*. It consisted of twelve books, wherein, under the thin disguise of mediæval heroes, he introduces several famous characters of modern times. The poem is very deficient in merit, and has been severely handled by the critics.

But it was reserved for Alfred Tennyson, the present poet laureate of England, to embody this legend in a form not only acceptable and delightful to modern readers, but one in which is exhibited the highest degree of poetic art.

The *Idylls of the King*—Tennyson's poem—consists of

* *Works of Roger Ascham*. Edition of 1761, p. 57.

ten parts, each of which is properly an idyllic episode in the Arthurian epic. The titles and the order of these are as follows: *The Coming of Arthur*; *Gareth and Lynette*; *Geraint and Enid*; *Merlin and Vivien*; *Launcelot and Elaine*; *The Holy Grail*; *Pelleas and Ettarre*; *The Last Tournament*; *Guinevere*; *The Passing of Arthur*. As the poem is easily accessible to all readers, we shall make no selections from it, but will urge the student who is desirous of a further acquaintance with this notable legend, and with the poetry of chivalry, to read the *Idylls* for himself. But he who reads it only for the pleasure which the narrative affords devours the husks merely, and leaves the rich kernel behind him untasted. It is as an allegorical personification of the soul at war with the passions of earth that the poem should be regarded. In it Arthur typifies the soul—yes, more; “he is a sort of ideal man, a blameless king, a kind of human Christ, the royal liberator of his people, who shall surely come again and complete his work, the mystically born king, victorious, defeated, but deathless.” Throughout the entire poem we see the body and its passions gain continually greater sway, till in the end the spirit’s earthly work is thwarted and defeated by the flesh. From the sweet spring breezes of *Gareth* and the story of *Geraint and Enid*, where the first gush of poisoning passion bows for a time, and yet passes and leaves pure a great and simple heart, we are led through *Merlin and Vivien*, where, early in the storm, we see great wit and genius succumb; and through *Launcelot and Elaine*, where the piteous early death of innocence and hope results from it, to the *Holy Grail*, where we find religion itself under the stress of it, and, despite the earnest efforts of the soul, blown into mere fantastic shapes of superstition. In *Pelleas and Ettarre* the storm of corruption culminates, whirling the sweet waters of young love and faith out from their proper channels, sweeping them into mist, and casting them in hail upon the land. Then comes the dismal autumn, dripping gloom of the *Last Tournament*, with its

awful and portentous close; and then in *Guinevere* the final lightning-stroke, and all the fabric of the earthly life falls smitten into dust, leaving to the soul a broken heart for company, and a conviction that if in this world only it had hope, it were of all things the most miserable.*

From the time of the Renaissance in England until the close of the eighteenth century, no new poetical romance appeared in English literature, and of those which had originated in mediæval times, none, save that of Arthur, retained any degree of popularity. During that time "the taste of European society preferred, both in art and literature, works modeled upon the masterpieces of Greek and Roman genius, and recoiled with an aversion, more or less sincere, from all that was Gothic or mediæval. In such a period, a romantic poem; had it appeared, would have been crushed by the general ridicule, or smothered under the general neglect."

Dr. Johnson, writing in 1780, says that since the time of Dryden, English poetry had shown no tendency to relapse into what he was pleased to call its original savageness, but that, on the contrary, its language had been refined, its numbers tuned, and its sentiments improved. Yet even while he was writing these words a reaction was taking place. Men were beginning to see that, in literature at least, those classic models which they had so long and so blindly followed were based upon no principle either of nature or reason. And they began to wonder whether there was not, after all, some truth in the poetic inspiration of the old masters, and whether there was not more poetry in the unconstrained effusions of Shakspeare and Spenser, and even in the neglected old ballads of the Middle Ages, than there was in the monotonous versification of Pope and his imitators. Forthwith a literary revolution was inaugurated. Works which had recently been considered merely the barbarous relics of an uncultivated age were

* *Spectator*, 1870.

read with pleasure, and it became the fashion to imitate them. Half-forgotten legends and traditions which lingered only in remote localities, or in the remembrance of ignorant old grandmothers and grandfathers, were furbished up and made to do duty in some capacity in the new romantic poetry which sprang up. The time had come when Gothic and mediæval, even Scandinavian, models were popular.

Prominent among the leaders of this literary revolution was Sir Walter Scott; and his romantic poems occupy a front rank among those of their class. The earliest of these poems is *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, published in 1805. It exhibits many traces of the influences of the old romances. In many places there is a close adherence to the language of the more ancient compositions, and some of his descriptions are almost identical in style with those of the Trouvères. "The poem is intended," says the author, "to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the borders of England and Scotland. The story is put into the mouth of an ancient minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his own original model. The date of the tale is about the middle of the sixteenth century, when most of the persons actually flourished."

In the narrative passages of this poem Scott has generally employed the eight-syllabled rhymed verse of the Trouvères; but in the descriptive and the more impassioned parts he has resorted to a variety of expedients in order to add to the harmony and strength of his numbers. For instance, he relieves the monotony of the regular octo-syllabic versification by the frequent introduction of short verses of six syllables; and almost every kind of metre, trochaic, dactylic, and anapestic, as well as iambic, is employed as occasion will allow. But the intense vigor and the exquisite melody which characterize the poem do not depend altogether upon the versification. There is the same variety

in the thoughts and in the actions described as in the manner of expression. There is that natural connection between the sound and the sense that we would expect in the music of an accomplished minstrel. The tones rise and fall, they waver and change, in harmony with the thoughts and feelings described. For example, observe with what sad weariness one canto closes:

Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!
 My harp has lost the enchanting strain;
 Its lightness would my age reprove;
 My hairs are gray, my limbs are old,
 My heart is dead, my veins are cold;—
 I may not, must not, sing of love.*

And then, when the minstrel is incited by applause and wine, how the next canto opens with all the passion and animation of a revived soul:

And said I that my limbs were old,
 And said I that my blood was cold,
 And that my kindly fire was fled,
 And my poor withered heart was dead,
 And that I might not sing of love?
 How could I, to the dearest theme
 That ever warmed a minstrel's dream,
 So foul, so false a recreant prove?
 How could I name love's very name,
 Nor wake my heart to notes of flame?†

Never once is there pause or break in this varied vivacity. The movement of the story is like that of a mountain rivulet, brisk and airy, flashing its clear waters among trees, dashing over precipices in its onward course, basking in the sunshine of the meadows, but never growing weary, never hesitating. And herein we discover the distinguishing characteristics of Scott's poetry. It is simple, forcible,

* Canto II., 30.

† Canto III., 1.

picturesque, and bright; charming all who read it, delighting all who listen to it; it is neither deep nor sublime, but it is sparkling and strong.

The following passages in this poem are worthy of special study:

The description of the minstrel. Introduction.

Melrose Abbey. Canto II., 1.

The death of poets. Canto V., 1, 2.

On patriotism. Canto VI., 1.

Pleased with the enthusiastic applause which greeted the *Lay*, Sir Walter Scott determined to make another trial in the same field, and in 1808 appeared his *Marmion*, which is now regarded as the best of his poetical performances. Each of the six cantos of this latter poem is prefaced by an epistle to some personal friend of the author. "The story," says Sir Walter, "turns upon the private adventures of a fictitious character; but it is called a tale of Flodden Field because the hero's fate is connected with that memorable defeat and the causes which led to it. The design of the author was, if possible, to apprise his readers at the outset of the date of his story, and to prepare them for the manners of the age in which it is laid. . . . The poem opens about the commencement of August, and concludes with the defeat of Flodden, 9th September, 1513."

There is not that variety of versification in *Marmion* that there is in the *Lay*, but the subject is grander, the action is broader, and there is a greater diversity of incident. There is in this poem an almost entire absence of character-painting, but this is more than compensated for by the vivid narration of events and the brilliant passages of description. For where was there ever found a broader landscape or a fairer scene than that which is pictured as opening up before Lord Marmion and his train as they approach Edinburgh? Where is there a nobler battle-piece than that of Flodden? No other writer, save perhaps old Homer alone, has succeeded so well in this kind

of painting. The minutest details are depicted so vividly and with such truth that one seems, while reading, to be an actual eye-witness of that which is related.

The student will not fail to read the entire poem. The passages most deserving of special study are the following:

The description of the castle and of Marmion. Canto I, 1-11.

The immuring of Constance. Canto II., 20-33.

Fitz-Eustace's song. Canto III., 9, 10.

Young Lochinvar. Canto V., 12.

The Parting of Marmion and Douglas. Canto VI., 13-15.

The Battle of Flodden. Canto VI., 19-35.

The Lady of the Lake, the third of Scott's great poetical romances, appeared in 1809. Although the critics have almost unanimously awarded the palm of excellence to *Marmion*, to the *Lady of the Lake* has been accorded the greater meed of popular favor. It has been quite generally acknowledged as the "most interesting, romantic, and picturesque" of all Scott's poems. As the other two had excelled,—the one in elegance and variety of style, the other in vividness of narration,—so this surpasses in characterization and in dramatic incident. Nowhere can we find a finer painting than that which is here given of Ellen Douglas, "so brave, so innocent, so simple-hearted and true, the very type of a high-spirited and high-born maiden, bold with the fearlessness of innocence. Never, while Benvenue stands and Loch Katrine holds up to him her silver mirror, shall that light skiff and lighter form forsake the silver strand, or cease to throw a charm over those lovely islets. The picture is so clear, so sweet, so fresh, that, as we say of Raphael, it might have been made yesterday. It is no profound study of an ideal woman, but it is a true Highland girl, frankest, most courageous, and most stainless of human creatures, capable of all and every exertion which love requires of her—facing all perils, like Una herself, with an unfaltering brow when those who are dear to her require her help. None of Sir Walter's heroines are

so perfect.”* The scene of the poem is in the neighborhood of Loch Katrine, and the time of the action is six days, a single canto being devoted to the events of each day. The incidents narrated are supposed to have occurred in the time of James V., of Scotland. The episode of the stag-hunt, with which the first canto begins, is one of the most beautiful passages in the poem; but the finest and most impressive is the description of the battle of Beal’ an Duine and of the death of Roderick Dhu. The student, after reading the entire poem, should make special study of the following passages:

The stag-hunt. Canto I., 1-10.

Description of the glen. Canto I., 11-13.

Boat song. Canto II., 19.

Coronach. Canto III., 16.

“The rose is fairest.” Canto IV., 1.

The sunrise. Canto VI., 1.

The minstrel’s visit to Roderick Dhu. Canto VI., 12.

Battle of Beal’ an Duine. Canto VI., 15-22.

The last of Scott’s great poetical romances, *The Lord of the Isles*, is far inferior in merit to either of the preceding. It is a story of the time of Bruce, 1307, and the materials were derived from Barbour’s *Gestes of King Bruce* and Dalrymple’s *Scottish Annals*. The half-mythical remoteness of the events described and the half-historical character of the hero are calculated to lend increased interest to the romantic element of the poem. But whether the audience had grown tired of the oft-repeated strain, or whether the author had begun to feel the consciousness of his power as a novelist, and had thus been drawn away from “the old harp which lent him so much grace and sweetness,” the new poem failed to make a favorable impression upon the public. Nevertheless, there are many passages in it which equal, if they do not excel, the finest strains in *Marmion* or the *Lady of the Lake*. The picturesque scene in the

* *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 1871.

castle of Artornish, the voyage of the hero-king among the isles, the cruel desolation of the western highlands, the surprise of Arran, the battle-scene of Bannockburn, are excellent examples of the author's wonderful powers of delineation.

Lord Byron, following in the footsteps of Sir Walter Scott, produced a number of poetical romances. The best of these are *The Giaour*, *The Siege of Corinth*, *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair*, and *Lara*. The stories are based on Oriental legends, and the scenes are laid in Greece and the Grecian archipelago. The *Giaour* is, as the author tells us in the sub-title, "a fragment. The story, when entire, contained the adventures of a female slave, who was thrown, in the Mussulman manner, into the sea for infidelity, and avenged by a young Venetian, her lover, at the time the Seven Islands were possessed by the republic of Venice." It contains some striking passages and beautiful descriptions, as, for instance, the following comparison of enslaved Greece to a corpse:

He who hath bent him o'er the dead,
Ere the first day of death has fled,
The first dark day of nothingness,
The last of danger and distress,
(Before decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers),
And mark'd the mild angelic air,
The rapture of repose that's there,
The fix'd, yet tender traits that streak
The languor of the placid cheek,
And, but for that sad, shrouded eye,
That fires not, wins not, weeps not now,
And but for that chill, changeless brow,
Where cold obstruction's apathy
Appalls the gazing mourner's heart,
As if to him it could impart
The doom he dreads, yet dwells upon;
Yes, but for these and these alone,

Some moments, ay, one treacherous hour,
He still might doubt the tyrant's power;
So fair, so calm, so softly sealed
The first, last look by death revealed !
Such is the aspect of this shore ;
'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more !
So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
We start, for soul is wanting there.

In *The Siege of Corinth*, founded upon an historical incident which occurred in 1715, there is more variety of description than in any other of Byron's romances. And it is in description that Byron excels. "His manner is indeed peculiar and almost unequalled," says Macaulay; "it is rapid, sketchy, full of vigor; the selection is happy; the strokes few and bold." Take, for example, his description of the night before the storming of the city :

'Tis midnight ; on the mountain's brown,
The cold, round moon shines deeply down,
Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
Spreads like an ocean hung on high,
Bespangled with those isles of light,
So wildly, spiritually bright ;
Who ever gazed upon them shining,
And turned to earth without repining,
Nor wished for wings to flee away,
And mix with their eternal ray ?
The waves on either shore lay there,
Calm, clear, and azure as the air ;
And scarce their foam the pebbles shook,
But murmured meekly as the brook.
The winds were pillowed on the waves ;
The banners drooped along their staves,
And, as they fell around them furling,
Above them shone the crescent curling ;
And that deep silence was unbroke,
Save where the watch his signal spoke,
Save where the steed neighed oft and shrill,

And echo answered from the hill,
 And the wide hum of that wild host
 Rustled like leaves from coast to coast,
 As rose the Muezzin's voice in air
 In midnight call to wonted prayer;
 It rose, that chanted, mournful strain,
 Like some lone spirit's o'er the plain;
 'Twas musical, but sadly sweet,
 Such as when winds and harp-strings meet,
 And take a long unmeasured tone,
 To mortal minstrelsy unknown.
 It seemed to those within the wall
 A cry prophetic of their fall;
 It struck even the besieger's ear
 With something ominous and dreat,
 An undefined and sudden thrill,
 Which makes the heart a moment still,
 Then beat with quicker pulse, ashamed
 Of that strange sense its silence framed;
 Such as a sudden passing bell
 Wakes, though but for a stranger's knell.*

The Bride of Abydos is a beautiful Turkish tale, opening with the following stanza, imitated from Goethe:

Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
 Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime?
 Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
 Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime?
 Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
 Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;
 Where the light wings of Zephyr oppressed with perfume
 Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gul in her bloom;
 Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
 And the voice of the nightingale never is mute;
 Where the tints of the earth and the hues of the sky,
 In color though varied, in beauty may vie,
 And the purple of ocean is deepest in dye;

* *The Siege of Corinth*, XI.

Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all, save the spirit of man, is divine?
'Tis the clime of the East; 'tis the land of the sun.
Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?
Oh! wild as the accents of lover's farewell
Are the hearts which they bear, and the tales which they tell.

The Corsair is an Oriental romance written in heroic couplets. Of this style of versification, the author says: "The stanza of Spenser is perhaps too slow and dignified for narrative, though I confess it is the measure most after my own heart. Scott, alone, of the present century, has hitherto completely triumphed over the fatal facility of the octo-syllabic verse. In blank verse, Milton, Thomson, and the dramatists are the beacons that shine along the deep, but warn us from the rough and barren rock on which they were kindled. The heroic couplet is not the most popular measure, certainly; but, as I did not deviate into the other from a wish to flatter public opinion, I shall quit it without further apology."

Lara is, no doubt, intended as a sequel to the *Corsair*, the principal characters of the earlier poem reappearing with new names, or in disguise. The finest passages in both poems are those descriptive of battle-scenes, and in them is illustrated one of Byron's chief characteristics—the power of imparting his own individuality to his descriptions, and of coloring his pictures with his own feelings and peculiarities. For example, read the *Corsair*, II., 4–6, and *Lara*, II., 10–16.

M. Taine writes thus of the *Corsair*: "It is marred by classic elegancies; the pirate's song at the beginning is no truer than a chorus at the Italian opera; his scamps propound philosophical antitheses as balanced as those of Pope. A hundred times ambition, glory, envy, despair, and the other abstract personages whose images in the time of the First Empire the French used to set upon their drawing-room clocks, break in amidst living passions.

The noblest passages are disfigured by pedantic apostrophes, and the pretentious poetic diction sets up its threadbare frippery and conventional ornaments. Far worse, he studies effect and follows the fashion."

Throughout his poems, Byron exhibits an almost total lack of the power of characterization. His heroines are all of the same type—Oriental beauties, loving, passionate, sensual, without intellectual aspirations, without souls. His description of one hero is the description of all—a man with fiery, unbridled instincts, capable of deep emotion and the finer feelings, scorning his fellow-men, skeptical, despairing, Byron himself. "He was himself," says Macaulay, "the beginning, the middle, and the end of all his own poetry, the hero of every tale, the chief object in every landscape." Byron says: "I should have been glad to have rendered my personages more perfect and amiable, if possible, inasmuch as I have been sometimes criticised, and considered no less responsible for their deeds and qualities than if all had been personal. Be it so; if I have deviated into the gloomy vanity of *drawing from self*, the pictures are probably like, since they are unfavorable; and, if not, those who know me are undeceived, and those who do not, I have little interest in undeceiving."*

Of Byron's shorter tales and of those less commonly read, as well as of *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, we shall speak in future chapters. The student may find it profitable to study portions of his best works, and, in the case of his longer poems, to institute a comparison between his genius and that of his great contemporary, Sir Walter Scott.

Lalla Rookh, an Oriental romance by Thomas Moore, was published in the year 1817. It is composed of four tales in verse, strung together upon a slender thread of prose narrative. *Lalla Rookh*, the beautiful daughter of the Indian emperor Aurungzebe, is represented as journeying

* *The Corsair*. Dedication to Thomas Moore, Esq.

from Delhi to Bucharia to meet her betrothed husband, the Prince Aliris. To while away the tediousness of the journey, one Feramorz, who professes to be a young poet of Cashmere, sings to the accompaniment of his guitar the four poems of which this story is the setting. The first poem is entitled *The Veiled Prophet*, and relates the story of a religious impostor and fanatic who, claiming to be the heaven-appointed destroyer of Mohammedanism, succeeded in leading many credulous dupes astray, and was finally defeated in battle and slain. The second poem is called *The Fire-Worshippers*. Like the first, it is a love-story, and the main incidents refer to the persecution of the fire-worshiping Guebres by their rulers, the Turks. The principal characters are Hafed, a Guebre chief, and Fatima, the daughter of the Mohammedan tyrant and persecutor. The third song, the lightest and most fanciful of all, is called *Paradise and the Peri*. It relates how a fairy, exiled from heaven, sought for and finally obtained a gift by which she was restored to her place in the abodes of bliss. Lastly, the poet sings of *The Light of the Harem* and the reconciliation of "the magnificent son of Akbar" with his favorite, the charming Nourmahal. The princess, Lalla Rookh, listening to these enchanting stories and the no less enchanting music which accompanies them, becomes enamored of the accomplished young bard, whom, when she reaches Bucharia, she recognizes as none other than her intended husband, the noble Aliris.

The prose portion of *Lalla Rookh*, which serves as a setting for the poetical episodes, is interesting and in the highest degree beautiful. And the poems themselves seem to reflect all the splendor and magnificence of Oriental scenery and life. But the sensuous richness of their style, the brilliancy of their imagery, and the artificial sparkle and gush of their descriptive passages, constitute their chief defects. They are, in short, overburdened with ornament. And yet their beauties are many and their merits are of a high order. The student cannot fail to derive great

pleasure from their perusal. As a writer of poetical romances, Moore has but few superiors.

The following beautiful passage is selected from the *Fire-Worshippers*:

“How sweetly,” said the trembling maid,
 Of her own gentle voice afraid,
 So long had they in silence stood,
 Looking upon that tranquil flood,—
 “How sweetly does the moonbeam smile
 To-night upon yon leafy isle!
 Oft, in my fancy’s wanderings,
 I’ve wished that little isle had wings,
 And we, within its fairy bowers,
 Were wafted off to seas unknown,
 Where not a pulse should beat but ours,
 And we might live, love, die alone!
 Far from the cruel and the cold,
 Where the bright eyes of angels only
 Should come around us, to behold
 A paradise so pure and lonely!
 Would this be world enough for thee?”
 Playful she turned, that he might see
 The passing smile her cheek put on;
 But when she marked how mournfully
 His eyes met hers, that smile was gone;
 And bursting into heartfelt tears,
 “Yes, yes,” she cried, “my hourly fears,
 My dreams, have boded all too right—
 We part—forever part—to-night!
 I knew, I knew it *could* not last—
 ’Twas bright, ’twas heavenly, but ’tis past!
 Oh! ever thus, from childhood’s hour,
 I’ve seen my fondest hopes decay;
 I never loved a tree or flower,
 But ’twas the first to fade away.
 I never nursed a dear gazelle,
 To glad me with its soft black eye,
 But when it came to know me well,
 And love me, it was sure to die!

Now, too,—the joy most like divine
 Of all I ever dreamt or knew,
 To see thee, hear thee, call thee mine,—
 Oh, misery! must I lose *that* too?
 Yet go—on peril's brink we meet;—
 Those frightful rocks—that treacherous sea—
 No, never come again—though sweet,
 Though heaven, it may be death to thee!
 Farewell—and blessings on thy way,
 Where'er thou goest, beloved stranger!
 Better to sit and watch that ray,
 And thee safe, though far away,
 Than have thee near me and in danger!”

We quote also a short passage from *Paradise and the Peri*. The Peri, after having vainly offered, as the price of her readmission to Paradise, the last drop of blood shed by a dying patriot, and the last sigh of a maiden who dies for her lover, finds at last, in the tear of a repentant sinner, “the gift that is most dear to heaven.”

But hark! the vesper-call to prayer,
 As slow the orb of daylight sets,
 Is rising sweetly on the air
 From Syria's thousand minarets.
 The boy has started from the bed
 Of flowers where he had laid his head,
 And down upon the fragrant sod
 Kneels, with his forehead to the south,
 Lispering the eternal name of God
 From purity's own cherub mouth,
 And looking, while his hands and eyes
 Are lifted to the glowing skies,
 Like a stray babe of Paradise,
 Just lighted on that flowery plain,
 And seeking for its home again.
 Oh! 'twas a sight,—that heaven, that child,—
 A scene which might have well beguiled
 Even haughty Eblis of a sigh
 For glories lost, and peace gone by.

And how felt *he*, the wretched man
 Reclining there, while memory ran
 O'er many a year of guilt and strife,
 Flew o'er the dark field of his life,
 Nor found one sunny resting-place,
 Nor brought him back one branch of grace?
 "There was a time," he said in mild,
 Heart-humbled tones, "thou blessed child!
 When, young and haply pure as thou,
 I looked and prayed like thee; but now——"
 He hung his head; each nobler aim
 And hope and feeling which had slept
 From boyhood's hour, that instant came
 Fresh o'er him, and he wept—he wept!

Moore was the author of another romantic poem which may be briefly mentioned here. It is entitled *The Loves of the Angels*, and is founded upon the following passage in Genesis vi.: "And it came to pass in those days that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all they chose." This poem is decidedly inferior to *Lalla Rookh*. The remoteness of the time in which the action is represented to have occurred, and the peculiar character of the actors, prevent us from entering into sympathy with the thoughts and feelings expressed in the poem, and serve to destroy entirely our interest in the narrative. Byron's "Mystery," entitled *Heaven and Earth*, published in 1822, is very similar in conception, being founded upon the same passage of Scripture. Charles Lamb ridiculed it in a burlesque poem called *Satan in Search of a Wife* (1831).

In our study of Poetical Romances we have wandered with our poets to many lands and among many peoples. With the rude versifiers of the Middle Ages we have listened to the legendary lore of the Danes and Saxons, and to the marvelous stories of the returned Crusaders; with Tennyson and the host of King-Arthur rhymesters we have become acquainted with the delightful myths of

Wales and of early Britain; with Scott we have studied the wild but beautiful traditions of the Scottish highlands; with Byron we have rambled among the enervating scenes and listened to the voluptuous stories of Oriental life; with Moore we have viewed the gorgeous splendors of the far East and been entranced with its impassioned music. Let us close this study by turning with the poet, William Morris, to the grand old hero-legends of our Scandinavian ancestors and kinsmen.

The Story of Sigurd the Volsung, by William Morris, was published in 1876. It is a romance derived from the Eddas and the old Norse Sagas. The metre of the poem is peculiar, and the language is exceedingly beautiful. Alliteration is frequently employed with striking effect, and there are but few words in the entire work which are not of Anglo-Saxon derivation. The following is the opening stanza, describing the dwelling-place of King Volsung:

There was a dwelling of kings ere the world was waxen old;
 Dukes were the door-wards there, and the roofs were thatched with
 gold;
 Earls were the wrights that wrought it, and silver nailed its doors;
 Earls' wives were the weaving-women, queens' daughters strewed its
 floors,
 And the masters of its song-craft were the mightiest men that cast
 The sails of the storm of battle adown the bickering blast.
 There dwelt men merry-hearted, and in hope exceeding great
 Met the good days and the evil as they went the way of fate;
 There the gods were unforgotten, yea whiles they walked with men,
 Though e'en in that world's beginning rose a murmur now and
 again
 Of the midward time and the fading and the last of the latter days,
 And the entering in of the terror, and the death of the People's
 Praise.

The first book relates the story of the Volsungs and how Sigmund, the father of Sigurd, was slain. The second tells

of the birth and the childhood of Sigurd, how he slew Fafnir the dragon, and awoke Brynhild upon the Hindfell mountain. The third book describes the meeting of Sigurd with the Niblungs, his deceiving of Brynhild, his marriage with Gudrun, and closes with his own death and that of Brynhild. The fourth book relates the subsequent fortunes of the Niblungs, and how, through Gudrun's influence, they were destroyed and Sigurd was avenged. The following passages will be of special interest to the student:

How Sigurd getteth to him the horse that is called Greyfell. Book II.

Regin's story of the treasure on Gnita Heath. Book II.

The dialogue between Sigurd and the Face of Terror. Book II.

Of the slaying of Sigurd the Volsung. Book III.

They are gone—the lovely, the mighty, the hope of the ancient Earth:

It shall labor and bear the burden as before that day of their birth:

It shall groan in its blind abiding for the day that Sigurd hath sped,

And the hour that Brynhild hath hastened, and the dawn that waketh the dead:

It shall yearn, and be oft-times holpen, and forget their deeds no more,

Till the new sun beams on Balder and the happy sealess shore.

REFERENCES.

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For further information regarding the metrical romances of the Transition Period, consult

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Many of these old romances are included in the publications of the Early English Text Society. (Information in regard to these may be had of Prof. F. J. Child, Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass., who is the American Secretary for the Society.)

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Scott, by R. H. Hutton, in *English Men of Letters*.

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Read also, in this connection, the history of Scotland from the earliest period to the reign of James V., and especially that part relating to the time of Bruce. For lighter reading, the student will be interested in

Miss Porter's *The Scottish Chiefs*.

Sir Walter Scott's *Rob Roy*; *Fair Maid of Perth*; *Old Mortality*; and *The Legend of Montrose*.

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An American edition of *Sigurd the Volsung* was published in New York in 1879. The student who wishes to know more of the grand old myth upon which this romance is founded is referred to Mallet's *Northern Antiquities* (Bohn); to Lettsom's *Fall of the Nibelungers* (London, 1876); to Auber Forestier's *Echocs from Mist Land* (Chicago, 1878); and to Anderson's *Norse Mythology*.

CHAPTER IV.

STORY-TELLING POETRY.

Geoffrey Chaucer—The Canterbury Tales—The Knight's Tale—The Clerk's Tale, etc.—Criticisms on Chaucer—Difficulties in Reading Chaucer—No Story-Telling Poetry in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries—Scott's Shorter Narrative Poems—Rokeby—Bridal of Triermain—Harold the Dauntless—Byron—Mazeppa—The Prisoner of Chillon—George Crabbe—Phebe Dawson—Strolling Players—William Wordsworth—The White Doe of Rylstone—Peter Bell—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—The Ancient Mariner—Christabel—Southey—Leigh Hunt's Story of Rimini—Keats—Eve of St. Agnes—Isabella—Thomas Campbell—Walter Savage Landor—Mrs. Hemans—Mrs. Browning—Lady Geraldine's Courtship—Tennyson—The Princess—Maud—Enoch Arden—Aylmer's Field—William Morris—Earthly Paradise—Longfellow—Tales of a Wayside Inn—Evangeline—Miles Standish—Hiawatha—Short Stories—Miscellaneous.

FIRST and chief among the story-tellers in English poetry was Geoffrey Chaucer. The age in which he lived was the most important in the intellectual history of England. Including, as it did, the last years of the Transition Period and the first of the new and more settled order of things, it was the dividing line which marked the beginning of a brighter era in the literary, political, and social annals of the English people. For this reason, therefore, a study of Chaucer's relations with the times in which he lived and with the society in which he moved becomes doubly interesting and important. We shall learn how he was directed and influenced by the intellectual tendencies of his age, and how he, in turn, shaped and controlled those tendencies. "A genuine product of the union of Saxon genius and Norman enterprise," he did more than any other man to harmonize the discordant elements which had been so long warring with each other, and to establish firmly the national language and literature.

Geoffrey Chaucer was born in London in the year 1328. Of his parentage and youth we know but little. His education must have been very carefully conducted; for, in his works, he displays a scholarly acquaintance with almost all the branches of knowledge which were then in vogue. He began to write at an early age, and continued to compose until the last year of his life. "We find him by turns in King Edward's army, in the king's train, husband of a maid of honor to the queen, a pensioner, a place-holder, a member of Parliament, a knight, founder of a family which was hereafter to become allied to royalty. Moreover, he was in the king's council, brother-in-law of John of Gaunt, employed more than once in open embassies or secret missions at Florence, Genoa, Milan, Flanders, commissioner in France for the marriage of the Prince of Wales, high up and low down on the political ladder, disgraced, restored to place. This experience of business, travel, war, and court was not like a book education."* And yet it was this very experience which made him a man of the world, acquainted with the age in which he lived and with its needs; and notwithstanding all this busy action, he still had time to think and to write.

In his writings, Chaucer borrowed much—from the French, from the Italian, from older writers; "wherever he found anything directed to Geoffrey Chaucer," says Lowell, "he took it and made the most of it." And indeed it was in this faculty of making the most of whatever came in his way that he excelled. In all his earlier works the influence of French literature and of the tastes and manners of the Trouvères may be plainly traced. *The Romaunt of the Rose*, commonly ascribed to Chaucer, is but little more than a literal translation from the French; and *The Boke of the Duchesse*, and *The Complaint of the Blacke Knight* are plainly imitations of French models. In *The Court of Love*, *The Cuckow* and *the Nightingale*, *The Flower*

* Taine. Vol I.

and the Leaf, and *The House of Fame*, distinct traces of the influence of the then decaying chivalric literature are seen. Between the years 1372 and 1378 Chaucer visited Italy in the character of ambassador for the king, and there he became acquainted with the works of the great Italian authors of that period, and was imbued with something of their literary spirit. The works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio had already begun that widespread influence which they have since exerted, not only over English literature, but over all the literature of Europe. Petrarch and Boccaccio were Chaucer's contemporaries; Dante had died in 1321.

When Chaucer returned to England, his knowledge of poetry was no longer confined to the Trouvère models. He had studied the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, and learned what comprehensiveness and depth there may be in poetry. In the sonnets of Petrarch he had discovered what may be gained by elegance of diction. In Boccaccio's *Filostrato* and *Decameron* he had found suggestions for the materials for exquisite stories not yet attempted in English. "He saw clearly and felt keenly what were the faults and what the wants of the prevailing literature of his country." He began to feel a species of contempt for the romance models which he and his countrymen had, up to that time, so servilely copied. Immediately, therefore, he set to work to inaugurate a new style and a more refined taste in English poetry. He wrote the history of *Troilus and Crescide*, borrowed from the Italian of Boccaccio's *Filostrato*; *The Legend of Good Women*, which is now notable as having inspired Tennyson with the idea of his *Dream of Fair Women*; *The Complaint of Mars*; *Annelida and Arcite*; and *The Parliament of Foules*, wherein is first shown something of that broad humor which afterwards becomes so conspicuous in *The Canterbury Tales*. We cannot afford to dwell here on these less important works of the great poet; some of them, as belonging more properly to other departments of poetry, will be spoken of elsewhere. We hasten

to a consideration of Chaucer's greatest work—the work of his last years and the most perfect specimen in existence of English story-telling poetry—the *Canterbury Tales*.

On an April day, five hundred years ago, when the young grass was springing from the damp, warm earth, and the little birds were making “melodie,” Chaucer stopped on a day at the Tabard Inn, in Southwark,

Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury with devout courage,

there to visit, with others, the shrine of Thomas à Becket,

The holy, blissful martyr, . . .
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.

At this season of the year many people were accustomed to make pilgrimages to that shrine, and hence there is no wonder that thirty other persons meet at the same inn, all bound upon the same journey. The company comprises representatives from all the walks of middle-class life; but there is neither a prince nor a beggar among them. “The characters are described by Chaucer with a vigorous fidelity which has never been surpassed in the whole range of art. Every figure stands out from the canvas sharp and clear, like pictures seen through a stereoscope. Not a touch, not a line is wanting; each trick of speech and peculiarity of dress or feature is photographed with pre-Raphaelite fidelity.” The first place in this description is given to the knight.

A worthy man,
That fro the time that he firste began
To riden out, he loved chevalrie,
Trouthe and honor, fredom and curtesie. . . .
And though that he was worthy, he was wise,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet na vilanie ne sayde
In alle his lif, unto no manere wight,
He was a veray, parfit, gentil knight.
* * * * * * *

With him ther was his sone, a yonge Squier,
 A lover, and a lusty bacheler,
 With lockes crull as they were laide in presse.
 Of twenty yere of age he was I gesse.

With the knight also was a Yeoman, his only servant,
 whom Chaucer describes as

Clad in cote and hood of grene,
 A sheaf of peacock arrows bright and kene
 Under his belt he bare ful thriftily. . . .
 And in his hond he bare a mighty bowe. . . .
 An horn he bare, the baudrik was of grene.
 A forster was he sothely as I gesse.

There; too, was a Monk :

His hed was bald, and shone as any glas,
 And eke his face, as it hadde ben anoint.
 He was a lord ful fat and in good point. . . .
 He was not pale as a forpined gost.
 A fat swan loved he the best of any rost.
 His palfrey was as broune as is a bery.

There was also a Nun, a prioress, "ful simple and coy,"
 named Madame Eglantine. She spoke the French of
 Stratford-at-bow, but was entirely ignorant of the French
 of Paris. She was a dainty eater.

She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle,
 Nor wet hire fingres in hire saucer depe. . . .
 Hire over lippe wiped she so clene,
 That in hire cuppe was no ferthing sene
 Of grese, when she dronken hadde hire draught.

Her nose was long, her eye was gray as glass, her mouth
 was small, and her forehead,

It was almost a spanne brode, I trowe.

She was so tender-hearted that she would weep if she
 saw a mouse caught in a trap. She had with her some
 "smale houndes,"—lap-dogs,—

that she fed
 With rosted flesh, and milk, and wastel brede;
 But sore wept she if one of hem were dede.
 Or if men smote it with a yerde smert.

In the company of this nun was "another Nonne also, and Prestes thre." Then there was a Friar, a very solemn man, but "a wanton and a mery." He was a "Limitour," that is, a friar to whom a certain district had been assigned in which to beg. He was well known at the taverns and by every tapster, much better than he was known by the poor of the parish. He was withal courteous and lowly, and the best beggar "in al his house."

For tho a widewe hadde but a shoo,
 Yet wold he have a ferthing or he went.

Next came a Merchant, with a forked beard and a beaver hat, and his boots clasped "fair and fetichly." He made high-sounding speeches, and delighted to boast of his wealth, so that "no wight might know that he was in dette."

Next followed in order a Clerk of Oxford, wearing a threadbare coat, and who would rather have twenty books at his bed's head than to have the richest robes "or fidel or sautrie," who spoke little and always to the purpose, and who on every occasion conducted himself as one who "wolde gladly lern and gladly teche;" a "Sergeant of the lawe, wary and wise," who knew all the quips and turns of the law and every statute by rote; a Franklin with a daisy-white beard, who delighted in "a sop of wine" and a table loaded with dainties; a Haberdasher, a Carpenter, a Weaver, a Dyer, and an Upholsterer, all clothed in the livery of "a great and solemn fraternity;" a Cook who accompanied the five last mentioned—

To boile the chickenes and the marie bones,
 And poudre marchante, tart, and galingale.
 He coude rost, and sethe, and broil, and frie,
 Maken mortrewes, and wel bake a pie.

Then followed a Sailor, brown and roughened and hardened by the many tempests he had encountered, and who knew every creek and haven from Gotland to Finisterre; a Doctor of Physic, the like of whom there was none on earth, and who knew the "cause of every maladie," and "loved gold in special," although "his study was but litel on the Bible;" a good Wife of Bath, "some deal deaf," who in her time had had five husbands, and had made a pilgrimage to Palestine.

Upon an ambler esily she sat,
Ywimpled wel, and on hire head an hat,
As brode as is a bokeler, or a targe.
A fote-mantel about hire hippes large,
And on hire fete a pair of sporres sharpe.

Next, a good country Parson, a learned man, but poor, who taught Christ but first followed Him himself; his brother, a Plowman, who loved God first, and his neighbor as himself; a Miller, a red-bearded, swaggering, lying bully; a gentle Manciple, or contractor, meek but cunning; a loose, long-legged Reeve, who cheated his lord out of his rents, and who "ever rode the hinderest of the route;" a Sompnour, with a fire-red face covered with blotches, who delighted in onions and garlic and strong liquor, and who, when drunk, would speak no word but Latin; his companion, "a gentil Pardonere," who carried a wallet packed with indulgences from Rome, and with stones and "pigge's bones," which he sold as relics. These, with the Host of the Tabard and Chaucer himself, make up the company of pilgrims, the description of whom composes the Prologue to the Tales.

To while away the tediousness of the pilgrimage and the return, the host proposes that each of the party

In this viage, shall tellen tales tway,
To Canterburyward, I mene it so,
And homeward he shall tellen other two,

Of adventures that whilom han befall.
And which of you that bereth him best of alle,
That is to sayn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas,
Shal have a souper at youre aller cost,
Here in this place, sitting by this post,
Whan that ye comen agen from Canterbury.

This, then, in brief, is the framework or setting in which these famous Tales are inserted. Had the original conception of the plan ever been carried to completion, there would have been in the collection one hundred and twenty-eight stories, since there were thirty-two pilgrims, and each pilgrim had agreed to tell four stories. Chaucer doubtless intended to describe in the connecting thread upon which these stories were to be hung, not only the adventures on the outward journey, but the arrival at Canterbury, the scenes and the religious ceremonies at the shrine of the saint, the return homeward, and the farewell supper at the Tabard. But his plan was never completed. Of the one hundred and twenty-eight stories, we have but twenty-five, and it is not probable that any more were ever written. The pilgrims never reached Canterbury, and there is every reason to believe that not only was the tale left incomplete by its author, but that those parts which he had finished were left in an unarranged condition. Of the twenty-five stories which we have, the Knight, the Miller, the Reeve, the Man of Law, the Wife of Bath, the Friar, the Sompnour, the Clerk, the Merchant, the Franklin, the second Nun, the Pardoner, the Shipman, the Nun or Prioress, the Monk, the Nun's Priest, the Contractor or Manciple, and the Parson, each relate one; to the Cook* and to Chaucer himself two stories each are assigned; the Squire's tale is incomplete; and the company is joined on the road by a

* Of the two tales ascribed to the Cook, the first is incomplete, and the second is thought by some to be, not the work of Chaucer, but an older poem inserted among the Tales at a later date. It is said to have suggested to Shakspeare the plan of *As You Like It*.

Canon and his yeoman, the latter of whom relates one story. The stories, with the exception of the Parson's tale and Chaucer's second narrative, are all in verse, and exhibit almost every variety of metrical form.

The longest of the stories, and in many respects the finest, is *The Knightes Tale*. It is an abridged translation of Boccaccio's *Teseide*, with many changes of plan and some additions in the descriptive passages. It is a story of Greece in the time of Theseus. But the author has transferred to that remote period the chivalric feelings and sentiments peculiar to the Middle Ages. Palamon and Arcite, two noble kinsmen, are taken prisoners in battle by King Theseus, who confines them in a tower at Athens overlooking the palace garden. One morning the Princess Emelie walks in the garden, gathering

floures, partie white and red,
To make a sotel garland for hire hed,
And as an angel hevenlich she song.

* * * * * *

Bright was the sun and clear that morwening,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on high,
In which he all the noble citee sigh,
And eke the gardin ful of branches grene,
Ther as this fresh Emelia the shene
Was in hire walk, and romed up and doun.

This sorweful prisoner, this Palamon
Goth in his chambre roming to and fro,
And to himself complaining of his wo. . . .

And so befel by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a window thikke of many a barre
Of yren gret, and square as any sparre,
He cast his eyen upon Emelia,
And therewithal he blent and cried, a!
As though he stongen were unto the herte.*

* *The Knightes Tale*, l. 193-221.

Arcite, hearing Palamon's exclamation, hurries to the window, and both are smitten alike with the charms of the beautiful Emelie. From this time a jealous hatred exists between the two kinsmen, and the minds of both are constantly filled with thoughts of the fair princess. But at length Arcite, through the efforts of a friend, is liberated on condition that he shall retire to Thebes and never again return to Athens.

The sommer passeth, and the nightes long
 Encresen double wise the peines strong
 Both of the lover and the prisoner.
 I n'ot which had the wofuller mistere.
 For, shortly for to say, this Palamon
 Perpetuelly is damned to prison,
 In chaines and in fetters to ben ded;
 And Arcite is exiled on his hed
 For evermore as out of that contree,
 Ne never more he shal his lady see.*

Finally, Arcite, unable to endure his banishment longer, returns disguised to Athens and becomes a page of the Princess Emelie; and Palamon, after an imprisonment of seven years, escapes. He conceals himself for safety in a grove not far from Athens.

And Arcite that is in the court real
 With Theseus the squier principal,
 Is risen, and loketh on the mery day. . . .
 And to the grove of which that I you told,
 By aventure his way he gan to hold,
 To maken him a gerlond of the greves,
 Were it of woodbind or of hauthorn leves,
 And loud he sang agen the sonne shene.
 "O Maye, with all thy floures and thy grene,
 Right welcome be thou faire freshe May,
 I hope that I some grene here getten may." . . .
 And in a path he romed up and down,

* *Ibid.*, l. 479-488.

Ther as by aventure this Palamon
Was in a bush, that no man might him se,
For sore afered of his deth was he.*

The two kinsmen thus unexpectedly brought together recall their former jealousy, exchange angry words, and finally engage in a duel in order to determine which is best entitled to fair Emelie's hand. While they are thus desperately fighting, Theseus, who is out on a hunting excursion with his queen and "Emelie yclothed all in grene," comes unexpectedly into the grove.

Under the sonne he loked, and anon,
He was ware of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughten breme, as it were bolles two.
The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
So hidously, that with the leste stroke
It semed that it wolde felle an oke.
But what they weren, nothing he ne wote.
This duk his courser with his sporres smote,
And at a stert he was betwix hem two,
And pulled out a swerd and cried, "Ho!
No more, up peine of lesing of your hed.
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be ded,
That smiteth any stroke, that I may sen!"†

The two angry combatants cease fighting, and each states his woeful case to the king, who finally makes the following decision:

My will is this for plat conclusion
Withouten any replication,
If that you liketh, take it for the beste,
That everich of you shal gon wher him leste
Freely withouten raunson or dangere;
And this day fifty wekes, ferre ne nere,
Everich of you shal bring an hundred knightes,
Armed for listes up at alle rightes
Alle redy to darrein hire by bataille.

* *Ibid.*, l. 647-660.

† *Ibid.*, l. 839-852.

And this behete I you withouten faille
 Upon my trowth, and as I am a knight,
 That whether of you bothe hath that might,
 This is to sayn, that whether he or thou
 May with his hundred, as I spake of now,
 Sle his contrary, or out of listes drive,
 Him shall I yeven Emelie to wive,
 To whom that fortune yeveth so fayr a grace.*

The two noble kinsmen are well pleased with the king's judgment. They thank him "with all their hertes might,"

And then with good hope and with herte blith,
 They taken hir leve, and homeward gan they ride
 To Thebes, with his olde walles wide.

At the end of the fifty weeks decreed by Theseus they repair again to Athens, each with a following of the noblest knights in the world. With Palamon is "Licurge himself, the grete king of Trace," and

An hundred lordes had he in his route,
 Armed full wel, with hertes sterne and stoute.

Arcite is equally well accompanied, for with him is "the great Emetrius, the king of Inde," and

An hundred lordes had he with him there,
 All armed save hir hedes in all hir gere,
 Ful richely in alle manere thinges.
 For trusteth wel, that erles, dukes, kinges,
 Were gathered in this noble compaignie,
 For love, and for encrese of chevalrie.
 About this king ther ran on every part
 Ful many a tame leon and leopart.†

Early on the morning of the day appointed for the contest each of the three persons most interested in the issue of that event goes secretly to the shrine of his favorite

* *Ibid.*, l. 987-1003.

† *Ibid.*, l. 1321-1328.

deity and implores assistance. Palamon offers his prayers to Venus:

Fayrest of fayre, o lady min Venus,
 Daughter to Jove, and spouse of Vulcanus,
 Thou glader of the mount of Citheron,
 For thilke love thou haddest to Adon,
 Have pitee on my bitter teres smert,
 And take myn humble praier at thin herte. . . .
 Ne axe I nat to-morwe to have victorie,
 Ne renoun in this cas, ne vaine glorie
 Of pris of armes, blowen up and doun,
 But I wold have fully possessioun
 Of Emelie, and die in hire servise. . . .
 This is the effecte and ende of my praier;
 Yeve me my love, thou blisful lady dere!*

But Arcite offers up his petition to Mars:

O stronge god, that in the regnes cold
 Of Trace honoured art, and lord yhold,
 And hast in every regne and every lond
 Of armes all the bridel in thin bond,
 And hem fortunest as thee list devise,
 Accept of me my pitous sacrifise. . . .
 And helpe me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,
 For thilke fire that whilom brenned thee,
 As well as that this fire now brenneth me;
 And do that I to-morwe may han victorie. . . .
 Now, lord, have reuthe upon my sorwes sore,
 Yeve me the victorie, I axe thee no more.†

Emelie, at the rising of the sun, repairs to the temple of Diana, and prays thus to the chaste goddess:

Now, helpe me, lady, sith ye may and can
 For tho three formes that thou hast in thee.
 And Palamon, that hath swiche love to me,
 And eke Arcite, that loveth me so sore,

* *Ibid.*, l. 1363-1402.

† *Ibid.*, l. 1515-1562.

This grace I praie thee withouten more,
 As sende love and pees betwix hem two:
 And fro me torne away hir hertes so,
 That all hir hote love, and hir desire,
 And all hir besy torment, and hir fire
 Be queinte, or torned in another place.
 And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,
 Or if my destinee be shapen so,
 That I shall nedes have on of hem two,
 As sende me him that most desireth me.*

The hour for the combat arrives; the knights take their places in the lists; the heralds sound the trumpets, and the tournament begins. Palamon and Arcite engage in a hand-to-hand struggle.

Ful oft a day han thilke Thebanes two
 Togeder met, and wrought eche other wo:
 Unhorsed hath eche other of hem twey.
 Ther n'as no tigre in the vale of Galaphey,
 Whan that hire whelpe is stole, whan it is lite,
 So cruel on the hunt, as is Arcite
 For jalous herte upon this Palamon:
 Ne in Belmarie ther n'is so fell leon,
 That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
 Ne of his prey desireth so the blood,
 As Palamon to sleen his foo Arcite.
 The jalous strokes on hir helmes bite;
 Out renneth blood on both hir sides rede.†

At length Arcite is mortally wounded, and is carried away to the king's palace.

And in a bed ybrought ful fayre and blive,
 For he was yet in memorie, and live,
 And alway crying after Emelie.

And when he finds that he must die he sends for Emelie and Palamon, "that was his cousin dere;" and

* *Ibid.*, l. 1454-1467.

† *Ibid.*, l. 1765-1777.

when they have come to his bedside he thus makes known his feelings and his wishes :

“Alas the wo ! alas the peines stronge,
 That I for you have suffered, and so longe!
 Alas the deth ! alas min Emelie !
 Alas departing of our compaignie !
 Alas mine hertes quene ! alas my wif !
 Min hertes ladie, ender of my lif ! . . .
 I have here with my cosin Palamon
 Had strif and rancour many a day agon,
 For love of you, and for my jalousie. . . .
 But in this world right now ne know I non,
 So worthy to be loved as Palamon,
 That serveth you, and wol don all his lif.
 And if that ever ye shal ben a wif,
 Foryete not Palamon, the gentil man.” . . .
 Dusked his eyen two, and failled his breth ;
 But on his ladie yet cast he his eye ;
 His laste word was, “ Mercy, Emelie ! ”
 His spirit changed hous, and wente ther,
 As I came never I cannot tellen wher.*

If the *Knights Tale* is the most finished and the most elevated of Chaucer's stories, the *Clerkes Tale* is the most beautifully pathetic. It, too, was borrowed from Italian sources. It is but a poetic rendering of the last novel in Boccaccio's *Decameron* ; although Chaucer probably derived his knowledge of the original narrative from Petrarch's Latin prose version of the story, entitled *De Obedientia et Fide Uxoriam*, *Mythologia*. Indeed, he makes the Clerk say as much in the *Prologue* to his tale :

* The story of Palamon and Arcite has been variously attempted by many authors since Chaucer's time. Richard Edwards wrote a comedy in 1566, using this story as the basis of the plot. John Fletcher attempted the same in his tragedy of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, in 1616. And Dryden, in his *Palamon and Arcite*, endeavored, with but a small degree of success, to modernize this poem, which really admits of no improvement.

I wol you tell a tale, which that I
 Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
 As proved by his wordes and his werk.
 Fraunceis Petrark, the laureat poete,
 Highte this clerk, whos rhetorike swete
 Enlumined all Itaille of poetrie,
 As Lynyan did of philosophie,
 Or law, or other art particulere;
 But deth, that wol not suffre us dwellen here,
 But as it were a twinkling of an eye,
 Hem both hath slaine, and alle we shul dye.

We shall attempt no analysis or further description of this tale, which has for centuries maintained its place among the affections of the world, but refer the student to the poem itself. "For our own part, while acknowledging the skill of the poet and the splendid pathos which animates the verse, we refuse to sympathize with the too-saintly heroine. She was, beyond doubt, a faithful wife, but she was not a faithful mother; and the apathy with which she sees her children led off, as she supposes to be murdered, while she utters no word of complaint to her brutal husband, but returns his loathsome caresses, excites only disgust. Still, the poem furnishes some of the best examples of the tender side of Chaucer's genius. In simple, child-like, human pathos, he is simply unapproachable. He lays a child's hand upon our heart and thaws it into tears."*

The Man of Law's Tale, or the story of Constance, was derived from French sources and from Latin prose romances current in Chaucer's time. Some have supposed that it was borrowed from Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, which was published before the appearance of the *Canterbury Tales*; but it is far more probable that both authors found the materials for their stories in such works as the *Chevalier au Cygne*, *Le Bone Florence de Rome*, and the *Gesta Romanorum*. In this tale, as in that of the Clerk, the character of the

* *Westminster Review*, 1871.

heroine is idealized beyond the limits of probability; but the reader will probably be far more interested in following the fortunes of the fair Constance, sent adrift all alone upon the wide sea, than those of the blindly obedient Griselda, at home with her tyrant husband.

The Squire's Tale, which gives promise of being the wildest and most romantic of all these stories, was never completed. It was doubtless derived from Oriental sources, and is a story of the times of Cambuscan, "the Tartre king." The student who reads the fragment which we have of this poem will regret that, as Milton expressed it, some spirit of thoughtfulness cannot

"Call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Cambal and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass;
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride."*

Of the remaining tales in this collection we must speak very briefly. *The Prioress's Tale* is the legend of a "litel clergion, sevene year of age," who sang wherever he went, "O Alma redemptoris," and who, after he had been foully murdered by the Jews, continued to sing the same hymn until a holy abbot had taken away "a grain from beneath his tong." This legend is one of the few that can be traced to English origin. *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, telling how Florentius through obedience won a perfect wife, may have been taken from Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, or, as in the case of *Constance*, both writers may have derived their stories from a common source. *The Franklin's Tale* is from Boccaccio, being the fifth novel of the tenth day of the *Decameron*. *The Nun's Tale* is the legend of St. Cecilia rendered into prose from the "Golden Legend" of Jehan

* *Il Penseroso*, 109-115.

de Vignoy, a Frenchman. *The Pardoner's Tale* is the story of three young men who go out to slay Death. They ask an old man where they shall find him, and he directs them to an oak-tree in the forest, where they find eight bushels of bright gold. While the youngest of the trio is sent to town to buy bread, the others, who remain to watch their treasure, plot to kill him in order that the gold may be divided between two only. But he himself has planned to poison the wine which he brings them, and so have all the treasure to himself. Upon his return he is waylaid and slain, and his murderers die from drinking his poisoned wine. This story is found in the Italian *Cento Novelle Antiche*. *The Reeve's Tale* is the sixth novel of the ninth day of the *Decameron*. *The Shipman's Tale* was also derived from the *Decameron*. *The Monk's Tale* was doubtless suggested by Boccaccio's Latin prose work on the *Falls of Illustrious Men*. It is a dismal commentary on the men of high estate who have fallen into adversity. *The Manciple's Tale* is a Chaucerian version of Ovid's story of the crow which turned from white to black for having told Apollo of the faithlessness of his Coronis. Chaucer himself begins to relate what promises to be an exceedingly weak romance of knight-errantry, a story entitled *The Rhyme of Sir Thopas*. It is written in the exact style and metre of the Trouvère romances, and is doubtless intended as a travesty upon those productions. But, ere he has recited many stanzas, the host stops him, and, with an air of thorough disgust, exclaims:

No more of this for Goddes dignite!
 . . . for thou makest me
 So wery of thy veray lewednesse,
 That al so wisly God my soule blesse,
 Min eeres aken of thy drafty speche.
 Now, swiche a rime the devil I betече!
 This may wel be rime dogerel, quod he.

The Nonnes Prestes Tale is the story of the carrying-off of a cock by a fox, and of the escape of the fowl through

the folly of Reynard in opening his mouth to mock his pursuers. The incidents are derived from an old poem supposed to have been written by Marie de France, but the moral is Chaucer's own.

The general plan of the *Canterbury Tales*—the stringing together of a number of distinct stories upon a slender thread of narrative—was very common in the earlier stages of literature. The idea may have originated with the *Thousand and One Nights*; and the plan was employed by Boccaccio in his *Decameron*, by the author of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, by Queen Margaret of Navarre in the *Heptameron*, and by the authors of many similar collections of stories. We shall find it used in later times by Thomas Moore in *Lalla Rookh*, and by William Morris in his *Earthly Paradise*. Of the large number of criticisms upon the character and influence of Chaucer's writings, we shall present but a few short extracts, preferring rather to send the student to the fountain-head—the books themselves.

Lowell says: "Chaucer is the first great poet who has treated To-day as if it were as good as Yesterday, the first who held up a mirror to contemporary life in its infinite variety of high and low, of humor and pathos. But he reflected life in its large sense as the life of *men*, from the knight to the plowman,—the life of every day as it is made up of that curious compound of human nature with manners. The very form of the *Canterbury Tales* was imaginative. . . . By choosing a pilgrimage, Chaucer puts us on a plane where all men are equal, with souls to be saved and with another world in view that abolishes all distinctions. . . . We find more and more, as we study him, that he rises quietly from the conventional to the universal, and may fairly take his place with Homer in virtue of the breadth of his humanity."

Prof. Marsh: "When Chaucer and Gower appropriated and nationalized the tales versified by French poets, or by classic authors, they felt that they were only taking up waifs or estrays, which had been left by the original owners

free to chance occupancy, and which the Norman or Roman bard had himself probably come into possession of 'by finding,' as the lawyers phrase it. It is an etymological remark worth making, that the very word *invention*, commonly used of the origination of a poem or a machine, radically means, not creation of that which is new, but accidentally coming upon, or finding that which is old."

Mr. Shaw: "Chaucer rendered to the language of his country a service in some respects analogous to that which Dante rendered to that of Italy. He harmonized, regulated, and made popular the still discordant elements of the national speech."

Another critic says: "In reading Chaucer we renew our youth. The gladness, the delight, the fresh keen joy in life and nature which we suppose men to have felt when their blood was richer and the world was young, comes back once more. The grass has a richer green, the sunshine a warmer glow, the months an intenser joy. We walk ankle-deep amid the laughing daisies, and brush the dew from off the grass at sunrise. Chaucer's conceptions are all of the joyous prime; sparkling as if washed in dew."

And M. Taine: "Chaucer is like a jeweler with his hands full; pearls and glass beads, sparkling diamonds and common agates, black jet and ruby roses, all that history and imagination had been able to gather and fashion during three centuries in the East, in France, in Wales, in Provence, in Italy, all that had rolled his way, clashed together, broken or polished by the stream of centuries, and by the grand jumble of human memory, he holds in his hand, arranges it, composes therefrom a long sparkling ornament, with twenty pendants, a thousand facets, which by its splendor, variety, contrasts, may attract and satisfy the eyes of those most greedy for amusement and novelty."

A word to the student in regard to the apparent difficulties in the way of reading Chaucer. The peculiarities of diction and of grammar make these difficulties seem much greater than they really are. When looked into carefully,

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they will generally vanish. By observing the following rules you will have but little trouble, after a brief practice, in reading not only well, but with a fluency which will be highly pleasing to you :

1. Final *e* should be pronounced as a separate syllable whenever the metre demands it.

2. In all words of French origin, such as visâge, corâge, maniér, the final syllable is accented.

The greatest difficulty in reading Chaucer arises from the antiquated manner in which the words are spelled ; but if the reader will change an occasional *y* to *i*, and drop a final *e* or a final *n*, here and there, the words which seemed at first so strange will appear more familiar to the eye and the understanding.

It is interesting to note that for nearly four hundred years after the time of Chaucer, if we except a few isolated and, for the most part, futile efforts, no more story-telling, purely as such, was attempted in English poetry. The stories of Skelton (1460-1529) are nothing more than vulgar satires. The stories in *The Mirror for Magistrates* (1559), although resembling in character the *Monk's Tale* and the *Legend of Good Women*, are chiefly historical and didactic. The narrative poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries partakes mainly of the dramatic and satiric form. Dryden's *Fables* (1700) are merely translations of Ovid and Boccaccio, and so-called modernizations of a few of Chaucer's *Tales*. Pope's *Thebais of Statius* and similar pieces are but translations or paraphrases. It was not until the literary revolution of the eighteenth century had restored to favor the great works of the old masters that poets began again to seek for inspiration in subjects and forms of expression more natural and more passionate than could be found in the artificial models and the cold sentimentality of classicism. It was then that the writing of tales and stories, merely for the pleasure which they afforded, became fully recognized as part of the legitimate business of the poet.

We have before spoken of the poetical romances of Sir Walter Scott as having been among the most immediate results of this great revolution in literary tastes. The mere mention of his shorter stories is all that is necessary here. The tale of *Rokeby* (1814) is so far inferior to his greater works, that we have not classed it with the poetical romances, preferring rather to place it here with his minor performances. The time of the story is that of the civil wars in England, and the feudal sentiment which runs through the poem harmonizes but illy with the actual conditions which prevailed at the time of the action. *Harold the Dauntless* and *The Bridal of Triermain* are shorter stories, neither of them possessing extraordinary merit. In both of them Scott takes us to his favorite field—that of chivalry and the feudal ages—in the depicting of which he has perhaps no equal. In *Harold* he has infused something of the spirit of the fierce old Norse sagas; while in *Triermain* he relates a striking episode connected with the legend of King Arthur.

The shorter stories of Byron are in many respects equal in merit to his longer and more pretentious romances. *Parisina*, merely as a poem, is beautiful and intensely pathetic, but as a story it is disagreeable and repulsive. *Mazeppa*, a story founded upon the adventures of the famous Cossack chief of that name, is a highly fanciful narrative but little in harmony with the known facts of history. *Beppo* is a story of Venetian love and intrigue, in which Italian manners and character are very accurately and vividly portrayed. *The Dream* is the story of Byron's early love-sorrow for Mary Chaworth, related in a most charming manner. *The Prisoner of Chillon* is perhaps the most popular of Byron's shorter poems. The story is founded on the history of the Genevan patriot, Bonnivard, born in 1496, and died in 1571. The following is the prisoner's description of his dungeon :

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old ;

There are seven columns, massy and gray,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft,
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:

And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,

For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score,
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:

And thus together—yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but pined in heart;

'Twas still some solace in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each,
With some new hope, or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.

Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon-stone,

A grating sound—not full and free
As they of yore were wont to be:

It might be fancy—but to me
They never sounded like our own.

George Crabbe, whom Byron described as

“Nature’s sternest painter, yet the best,”

was the author of a number of poetical tales, all possessing considerable merit. His *Tales in Verse*, which appeared in 1812, is a collection of humorous and pathetic stories relating to life among the lowly poor. It is in the delineation of the character and manners of the lower classes that Crabbe particularly excels. He portrays their virtues, their vices, their weaknesses, their heroism, in a manner painfully faithful to nature, often shocking our finer sensibilities, repelling us, even, by the very truth and exactness with which he presents his characters to our view. The most unattractive subjects, the pauper, the criminal, the cripple, the poacher, the smuggler, the barren heath, the noisome fen, the ruined quay, the wretched lanes and by-ways, he paints in vivid but melancholy colors. In his *Tales of the Hall*, published in 1819, he attempted with but indifferent success to represent the various phases of character found in the higher walks of life. These tales, some humorous, some pathetic, are represented as being related by two brothers, who, after having been separated since childhood, meet in their old age, and rehearse their varied experiences in life. *The Hall of Justice* is a gypsy’s story, a terrible tale of crime and of avenging justice. *Sir Eustace Grey* is a no less terrible story of a madman’s career. Crabbe’s earlier works,—*The Library*, *The Village*, *The Parish Register*, and *The Borough*,—although mainly descriptive and didactic, contain some short stories and sketches of considerable merit. The following, from his story of Phebe Dawson in the *Parish Register*, is a good example of his powers of pathetic narration :

Lo! now with red rent cloak and bonnet black,
And torn green gown loose hanging at her back,
One who an infant in her arms sustains,
And seems in patience striving with her pains ;

Pinched are her looks as one who pines for bread,
Whose cares are growing, and whose hopes are fled ;
Pale her parched lips, her heavy eyes sunk low,
And tears unnoticed from their channels flow ;
Serene her manner, till some sudden pain,
Frets the meek soul, and then she's calm again ;
Her broken pitcher to the pool she takes,
And every step with cautious terror makes ;
For not alone that infant in her arms,
But nearer cause her anxious soul alarms ;
With water burdened, then she picks her way,
Slowly and cautious in the clinging clay ;
Till, in mid-green, she trusts a place unsound,
And deeply plunges in the adhesive ground ;
Thence, but with pain, her slender foot she takes,
While hope the mind as strength the frame forsakes ;
For when so full the cup of sorrow grows,
Add but a drop, it instantly o'erflows.
And now her path but not her peace she gains,
Safe from her task, but shivering with her pains ;
Her home she reaches, open leaves the door,
And placing first her infant on the floor,
She bares her bosom to the wind, and sits,
And sobbing, struggles with the rising fits ;
In vain, they come, she feels the inflating grief,
That shuts the swelling bosom from relief ;
That speaks in feeble cries, a soul distressed,
Or the sad laugh that cannot be repressed ;
The neighbor-matron leaves her wheel, and flies
With all the aid her poverty supplies ;
Unfee'd, the calls of nature she obeys,
Not led by profit, not allured by praise ;
And waiting long, till these contentions cease,
She speaks of comfort, and departs in peace.

A recent English critic speaks thus of George Crabbe :

"Though he occupies so marked a place in the history of English poetry, he has not met in our generation with all the attention which he deserves. Something of this comparative neglect is to be attributed to changes in

society; the altered position of the poor has fortunately deprived his poems of much of the reality they once possessed. Something, too, must be ascribed to the revolutions of taste. We have been long accustomed to look at nature and peasant-life through the philosophic medium created for us by Wordsworth and his followers. From the poetical standpoint of this school, Crabbe is as far removed as he is from the conventional pastoralism of his predecessors. His intention is simply to paint things as they are, and modern ideology therefore finds in his poetry an uncongenial atmosphere. But beyond this it must be allowed that, of all standard English writers, Crabbe makes the largest demands on the patience of his readers. His great defect is an incurable want of taste. He seems to delight in the exhibition of vulgar details. These he introduces into his poetry without the slightest attempt at generalization or selection. In the midst of a passage of sustained tragic pathos he shocks us by the appearance of some incredibly mean thought or word; his shrewd humor runs without restraint into coarseness, and he frequently oversteps the line that divides the horrible from the terrible. . . . As an observer and painter of the individual truths of nature, no poet has ever approached him. . . . His powers of pathos are extraordinary, and his faculty of giving pain is often put to an illegitimate use. . . . As a painter of character, he evidently modeled himself on Pope, but the style of the two poets is as different as their genius."

We copy, for the purpose of further illustration, the following lines from the *Borough*:

STROLLING PLAYERS.

Sad happy race! Soon raised and soon depressed,
Your days all passed in jeopardy and jest;
Poor without prudence, with afflictions vain,
Not warned by misery, not enriched by gain:
Whom justice, pitying, chides from place to place,

A wandering, careless, wretched, merry race,
 Who cheerful looks assume, and play the parts
 Of happy rovers with repining hearts;
 Then cast off care, and, in the mimic pain
 Of tragic woe, feel spirits light and vain,
 Distress and hope—the mind's, the body's wear,
 The man's affliction and the actor's tear:
 Alternate times of fasting and excess
 Are yours, ye smiling children of distress.
 Slaves though ye be, your wandering freedom seems,
 And with your varying views and restless schemes,
 Your griefs are transient, as your joys are dreams.

William Wordsworth was the writer of numerous tales and stories in verse. Among these the only one worthy of more than passing notice is *The White Doe of Rylstone*, written in 1810. The story is an exceedingly mournful one, relating chiefly to the ruin of a noble family who had taken part in the north country insurrection which occurred in Queen Elizabeth's reign. The poem itself was suggested by a tradition current in Yorkshire, that soon after the destruction of the family of Rylstone Hall, a white doe was in the habit of making weekly pilgrimages from Rylstone to Bolton Abbey.

White she was as lily of June,
 And beauteous as the silver moon
 When out of sight the clouds are driven,
 And she is left alone in heaven;
 Or like a ship some gentle day
 In sunshine sailing far away,
 A glittering ship, that hath the plain
 Of ocean for her own domain.

On the Sabbath this doe was "constantly found in the abbey church-yard during divine service, after the close of which she returned home as regularly as the rest of the congregation." The poem is long and at times dull; the personages represented are described as possessing more

than human perfections, and a disagreeable air of mysticism and unreality pervades the entire story.

Peter Bell, another of Wordsworth's stories, was published in 1819. Almost entirely devoid of merit itself, it marks that point in the poet's career when the public began to appreciate his works and to rate them at their real worth. Wordsworth tells us that he had been twenty years in writing and perfecting this poem, and he confidently expected that the world would regard it as a masterpiece. But, if we except the opening stanzas, in which he describes the personal appearance and character of Peter,—“a wild tramp and a wanderer,”—there is nothing more ridiculously absurd in the whole range of literature. “The tale,” he inform us, “was founded upon an anecdote I read in a newspaper of an ass being found hanging his head over a canal in a wretched position. Upon examination a dead body was found in the water, and proved to be the body of his master. In the woods of Alfoxden I used to take great delight in noticing the habits, traits, and physiognomy of asses; and I have no doubt that I was put upon writing the poem of *Peter Bell* out of liking for the creature that is so often dreadfully abused.”

This poem was received with deserved ridicule; and Shelley wrote an amusing parody on it entitled *Peter Bell the Third*. The story of *The Idiot Boy* is scarcely superior to *Peter Bell* either in conception or execution. Wordsworth's more popular poems will be noticed elsewhere.

The fame of Samuel Taylor Coleridge as a poet rests, and may well rest, on three poems. His *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, his *Christabel*, and his *Genevieve* are not excelled in grace of imagery, in picturesque, fantastic representation, in beauty of expression. All else that he has written—and he has written many fine things—are of secondary interest and excellence when compared with these. These “might be bound up in a volume of twenty pages, but they should be bound in pure gold.”

The *Ancient Mariner* is a poem so wonderful in its very

nature and conception that no description can convey to the mind any correct idea of its real power and beauty. The student, before proceeding further with his literary studies, should read this poem entire. The hero, an ancient mariner with long gray beard and glittering eye, relates to a marriage-guest, who stops unwillingly to listen, a strange, weird story of the sea. He tells how, having wantonly killed an albatross, he suffers in consequence the most terrible misfortunes. The ship is becalmed in mid-ocean.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink ;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

One after another, his shipmates dropped down dead.

Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye ;
Four times fifty living men
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan),
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

Then, after many days of intense wretchedness and loneliness, the ancient mariner's heart is softened, and he looks upon the creatures of the sea with love and compassion.

O happy living things ! no tongue
Their beauty might declare ;
A spring of love gush'd from my heart,
And I bless'd them unaware.

Finally he is refreshed with sleep, and when he awakes it rains. And "a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down

by the invocation of the guardian saint," propel the ship forward, and, at last, the mariner reaches his native land.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

The germ of this story was suggested to Coleridge by Wordsworth, who had derived it from a passage in Shelvocke's *Voyages*, wherein it is stated that the second mate, who was of a despondent and superstitious nature, fancied that the foul weather which they encountered on their voyage was caused by an albatross which was following the vessel. Other ideas were derived from a dream related to the poet by his friend, Mr. Cruikshank.

Throughout the poem we are brought face to face with the real and the tangible in its hopeless, helpless struggle with the unseen. And what a sense of utter loneliness, of isolation from the world of human sympathies, pervades the entire action of the story.

Alone on a wide, wide sea;
So lonely 'twas that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

The spectre-ship with its ribs seen as bars on the face of the setting sun, the whispering of the spirits, the presence of the ghastly dead, all intensify the weird effect of that one speck of humanity upon the noiseless, boundless waters.

So vivid and so real seems this awful trance of silence,—this tangible solitude, as it were,—that we enter into complete sympathy with the hero. We feel with him the lonesomeness, the awe, the fearfulness of the situation. With him “we listen and look sideways up,” while fear at his heart, as at a cup, his life-blood seems to sip. And then, when the spell begins to lift and the solitude to be left behind us in the great illimitable sea, how tenderly and sweetly the silence is broken!

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky,
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seem'd to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute,
And now it is an angel's song,
Which makes the heavens be mute.

And now a change comes over the scene. The spirits depart from the dead bodies.

No voice did they impart—
No voice; but O! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

Propelled by an unseen power, the ship glides into the harbor, and we are brought back to the tangible and the visible, and to human fellowship once again.

Swinburne, speaking of the *Ancient Mariner*, says: “It is perhaps the most wonderful of all poems. In reading it we seem rapt into that paradise revealed by Swedenborg, where music and color and perfume were one, where you could hear the hues and see the harmonies of heaven. For absolute melody and splendor it were hardly rash to call it the first poem in the language. An exquisite instinct married to a subtle science of verse has made it the supreme model of music in our language.”

And the unfinished poem, *Christabel*, is scarcely inferior to it. It is a picture of white innocence, purity, and truth, pursued and persecuted by the powers of evil working in unseen ways. The story is broken off abruptly and without a hint towards solving the mystery which envelops it; but the very incompleteness of it helps to increase the power of the poem. "Completion could scarcely have failed to lessen its reality, for the reader could not have endured, neither could the poet's own theory have endured, the sacrifice of Christabel, the triumph of evil over good; and had she triumphed, there is a vulgar well-being in victory which has nothing to do with such a strain." The student cannot afford to pass this poem by without careful study. The language and the metrical arrangement of the verse are peculiar and in full accord with the fantastic conception of the poem. Indeed, the versification is based upon a principle not commonly practiced by the poets—that of counting the number of accentuated words in a line instead of the number of syllables. "Though the latter," says Coleridge, "may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four." The result is an irregular, but strangely beautiful harmony, scarcely to be attained by the ordinary methods of versification. The following specimen will illustrate:

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak-tree,
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows:
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
Her face—oh, call it fair, not pale!
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

This poem is pervaded, through and through, with a simple charm inexpressibly sweet and beautiful. We quote but a few lines more :

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu Maria shield her well!
She foldeth her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Dressed in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone;
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandaled were;
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!

Swinburne says of Coleridge: "He has helped men to think; he has touched their thoughts with passing colors of his own; but has he moved and moulded it into new and durable shapes? To me, set beside the deep direct work of those thinkers who have actual power to break down and build up thought, to construct faith or destroy it, his works seem not as theirs is. And yet, how very few are even the greatest names we could not better afford to spare, would not gladlier miss from the roll of 'famous men and our fathers that were before us.' Of his best verses, I venture to affirm that the world has nothing like them, and can never have; that they are of the highest kind and of their own. They are jewels of the diamond's price, flowers of the rose's rank, but unlike any rose or diamond known."

Another critic, writing in *Blackwood's Magazine*, says: "In his own sphere he is unapproachable. He is the lord

of that mystic region which lies between heaven and earth. Its wild, spiritual forces, its weird dangers and delights, the primal struggle between light and darkness, order and chaos, the everlasting warfare between the spirits of earth and hell and that feeble and ignorant humanity which yet is panoplied and sheathed in invulnerable defenses, by the protection and inspiration of God, are as familiar to him as the air he breathes; these are his themes, the burden of his lofty, historic, prophetic song, and in this wondrous sphere he is at once supreme and alone."

Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Robert Southey are often called the "Lake Poets," from the fact that for some years they resided in the lake district in Cumberland. The term was at first applied in derision:

"They lived in the lakes, an appropriate quarter
For poems diluted with plenty of water."

But it was afterwards used as an honorable designation of that school of poets who, with Wordsworth, recognized Nature as the chief and only source of poetic inspiration.

Of the metrical tales of Robert Southey, the third poet of this school, but little need be said. *The Tale of Roderick*, if we omit his so-called epics, is the most ambitious of his performances in this direction. He published a volume of short metrical tales in 1805. These stories, although possessing more real merit than his longer poems, are deficient in interest, and seldom rise above the level of dull mediocrity. At the present day, Southey, as a poet, is seldom read or admired.

Leigh Hunt's *Story of Rimini*, published in 1816, is worthy of the student's attention. It is a story of Italy in the thirteenth century,—a story of love and crime and retribution, derived probably from an episode in Dante's *Divina Commedia*. The poem contains many beautiful passages and some really fine conceptions. The following passage, describing the funeral of the lovers, will serve as an example:

The days were then at close of autumn still ;
A little rainy, and, towards nightfall, chill ;
There was a fitful moaning air abroad ;
And ever and anon, over the road,
The last few leaves came fluttering from the trees,
Whose trunks now thronged to sight, in dark varieties.
The people, who from reverence kept at home,
Listened till afternoon to hear them come ;
And hour on hour went by, and nought was heard
But some chance horseman or the wind that stirred,
Till towards the vesper hour ; and then 'twas said
Some heard a voice, which seemed as if it read ;
And others said that they could hear a sound
Of many horses trampling the moist ground.
Still, nothing came—till on a sudden, just
As the wind opened in a rising gust,
A voice of chanting rose, and as it spread,
They plainly heard the anthem for the dead.
It was the choristers who went to meet
The train, and now were entering the first street.
Then turned aside that city, young and old,
And in their lifted hands the gushing sorrow rolled.
But of the older people, few could bear
To keep the window, when the train drew near ;
And all felt double tenderness to see
The bier approaching slow and steadily,
On which those two in senseless coldness lay,
Who but a few short months—it seemed a day—
Had left their walls, lovely in form and mind,
In sunny manhood he—she first of womankind.
They say that when Duke Guido saw them come,
He clasped his hands, and looking round the room,
Lost his old wits forever. From the morrow
None saw him after. But no more of sorrow.
On that same night those lovers silently
Were buried in one grave under a tree ;
There, side by side, and hand in hand, they lay
In the green ground : and on fine nights in May
Young hearts betrothed used to go there to pray.

Prof. Dowden says: "Leigh Hunt's poetry was not the poetry of thought and passion which we have in Shakespeare; nor—to use his own words—that of 'scholarship and a rapt ambition' which we have in Milton. He could have passed his whole life writing eternal new stories in verse, part grave, part gay, of no great length, but 'just sufficient,' he says, 'to vent the pleasure with which I am stung on meeting with some touching adventure, and which haunts me till I can speak of it somehow!'"

His poetry is characterized by its animated description, its abundance of imagery, and the liveliness of its purely fanciful passages. He was a great admirer of Boccaccio, and of Chaucer and Spenser, whom he has frequently imitated with considerable success. But he can, by no means, be ranked among our great poets.

The larger portion of the poems of John Keats might be noticed in this chapter. Of his greatest works, *Endymion* and *Hyperion*, we shall speak elsewhere. His story of *The Eve of St. Agnes* is a most charming production. Leigh Hunt says of this poem: "It is the most delightful and complete specimen of his genius; graceful as the beardless Apollo; glowing and gorgeous with the colors of romance." The following stanzas will convey some idea of this poem and of what the critics have been pleased to style the "extreme sensuousness" of Keats's descriptions:

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!

The owl, for all its feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

Full on the casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,

As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon :
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint :
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
 Save wings, for heaven :—Porphyro grew faint :
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
 Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd
 Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away ;
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day ;
 Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain ;
 Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray ;
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
 As though a rose should shut and be a bud again.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
 And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness ;
 Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
 And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
 And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
 And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!—how fast she slept !

* * * * *

And they are gone : ay, ages long ago
 These lovers fled away into the storm.
 That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
 And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
 Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
 Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
 Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform ;
 The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
 For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

Isabella ; or, the Pot of Basil, is derived from Boccaccio, and is scarcely inferior in poetic merit to the *Eve of St. Agnes*.

Lamia is a strange, weird story of witchery and enchantment. It is derived from an anecdote found in the *De Vita Apollonii* of Philostratus, and repeated by Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, of a young man who fell in love with a serpent or lamia disguised as a woman, and afterwards married her.

Prof. Masson, writing of Keats, says: "There is hardly any recent poet in connection with whom the mechanism of verse in relation to thought may be studied more delightfully. . . . Where, on the whole, shall we find language softer and richer, verse more harmonious and sweetly linked, and, though usually after the model of some older poet, more thoroughly novel and original? Or where shall we see more beautifully exemplified the power of that high artifice of rhymes, by which, as by little colored lamps of light thrown out in advance of the prow of their thoughts from moment to moment, poets steer their way so windingly through the fantastic gloom?"

It is quite a descent from the masterpieces of Coleridge and Keats to the plainly inferior poems of Thomas Campbell; but we must not neglect to mention in this connection the latter's charming verse-stories of *Gertrude of Wyoming* and *O'Connor's Child*. *Gertrude of Wyoming* is the first poem of any note which deals with American scenery and an American subject. The plot of the story is very simple and sometimes obscure, but the poem excels in the delineation of character and passion. And the reader will be delighted with the beautiful home-scenes and with the pleasing descriptions of forest and river and of frontier life which, indeed, constitute the chief charm of this work. But there is, after all, a certain stiffness and artificiality in the versification and language which seriously detract from the beauty and interest of what would otherwise be a most delightful poem. The student is advised to read, as one of the most beautiful and characteristic passages, the Death-Song of Outalissi, beginning with the thirty-second stanza of Part III. Henry Taylor

says of this poem: "One disadvantage that it had to contend with was the *locus in quo*. The scene is laid in America. Now there is no people on the face of the earth who have a quicker sense of what is poetical and romantic than the Americans. But they themselves would desire to forget their own country when their imaginations are to be invoked and they are to lose themselves in the regions of romance. They are affected quite as much as we are, if not more, by what is old and unfamiliar."

The poem of *O'Connor's Child* is a pathetic story most exquisitely told—"the very soul of song, tragic, romantic, and passionate." It is full of energy and of graceful imagery; a vivid picture of rugged feudal manners and of the mingled lights and shadows of wild Celtic life.

Oh! once the harp of Innisfail
 Was strung full high to notes of gladness;
 But yet it often told a tale
 Of more prevailing sadness.
 Sad was the note, and wild its fall,
 As winds that moan at night forlorn -
 Along the isles of Fion-Gall,
 When, for O'Connor's child to mourn,
 The harper told, how lone, how far
 From any mansion's twinkling star,
 From any path of social men,
 Or voice, but from the fox's den,
 The lady in the desert dwelt;
 And yet no wrongs, nor fear she felt:
 Say, why should dwell in place so wild,
 O'Connor's pale and lovely child?

Campbell wrote also a longer poem called *Theodoric*, but it was a complete failure. Among his shorter tales are *Glenara*, *The Ritter Bann*, *The Spectre Boat*, and *Lord Ullin's Daughter*. But his poems, like Southey's, are now seldom read, and, with the exception of a few ballads to be mentioned elsewhere, will doubtless ere many years be forgotten.

The poetical tales of Walter Savage Landor are neither numerous nor popular, and the neglect with which they have been received is no doubt deserved. Coleridge's judgment of Landor is not far from correct: "His powers are considerable, but he seems to be totally deficient in that modifying faculty which compresses several units into one whole. The truth is that he does not possess imagination in its highest form. Hence his poems, taken as a whole, are unintelligible; you have eminences excessively bright, and all the ground around and between is darkness." His story of *Gunlaug* and that of *Iphigeneia and Agamemnon* may be mentioned here. His greater effort, *Gebir*, will receive notice in the chapter on Epic poetry.

Thirty years ago no poetry was more popular or more generally read than the verses of Mrs. Felicia Hemans. Her stories are pervaded with a moral earnestness and a sentimentality of feeling peculiarly attractive to a certain class of readers. But there is an oppressive sameness in her poems which wearies the reader with the constant repetition of chivalrous and romantic sentiments and with oft-repeated pictures of the woods and halls of England and the warlike glories of the past. None of her tales are of sufficient merit to deserve special study.

The greatest of female poets is Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and of her we shall speak more at length in another chapter; but in this connection we call the student's attention to the charming little poem entitled *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*. This poem, written in 1844, describes how a noble lady falls in love with a poet beneath her in rank, and how she bestows her hand upon him. The poet himself is represented as relating the story in a letter written to a friend. We quote the concluding stanzas:

Said he,—“I would dream so ever, like the flowing of that river,
Flowing ever in a shadow greenly onward to the sea!
So, thou vision of all sweetness—princely to a full completeness—
Would my heart and life flow onward—deathward—through
this dream of thee!”

W. B. D.

Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept smiling,
 While the silver tears ran faster down the blushing of her
 cheeks;
 Then with both her hands enfolding both of his, she softly told
 him,
 "Bertram, if I say I love thee, . . . 'tis the vision only
 speaks."

Softened, quickened to adore her, on his knee he fell before her—
 And she whispered low in triumph, "It shall be as I have
 sworn!
 Very rich he is in virtues—very noble—noble certes;
 And I shall not blush in knowing that men call him lowly
 born."

But few poets of the nineteenth century occupy a higher or more honorable position than Mrs. Browning. Her genius was, to say the least, remarkable. Her poetry is of that kind which comes only through genuine inspiration. To her spiritual and intellectual conception "earth was crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God." "The emerald beauty of a thousand valleys embroidered by the silver threads of meandering rivers; the grandeur of the everlasting hills, with their lofty and majestic calm; the terrible rolling of the restless and unsatisfied sea; the stars that at midnight shine down upon us like the eyes of those we love; above all, the whisper of God as it thrills through the human heart—these were her informers and teachers. She sang of all these that men might be nobler, freer, and purer."*

Coming now to the writers of our time, we shall find in the poetry of Tennyson many beautiful stories related in the highest style of poetic art. *The Princess* is, as its author has styled it, a medley—"a medley of ancient and modern materials, a show of mediæval pomp and movement, observed through an atmosphere of latter-day thought and emotion." Never, perhaps, has so slight a tale been told

* *Cornhill Magazine*, 1874.

in so majestic a manner. The heroic form of the poem makes us forget the triviality of the material, nor do we realize the absurdity of the story until, at the end, we are reminded of the incongruous elements of which it is composed.

Maud is a poem full of strange beauties; but he who reads it merely as a story will be disappointed. In it the poet has attempted—and with but very indifferent success—the treatment of a psychological subject similar to that which Shakspeare has treated in so masterly a manner in *King Lear* and *Hamlet*—the method that there is in madness. The father of the hero having been swindled out of an immense property, has committed suicide. The youth remembers well that night when the roots of his hair were stirred

By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whispered fright.

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.

Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be maintained:
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,

Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drained.

He grows to manhood, and falls in love with Maud, the daughter of "the old man at the Hall." But Maud's brother interferes, and the result is a duel in which the brother is killed. The lover flees from the country, but after a time returns, and, finding that Maud has died, he becomes mad. He fancies himself dead and buried, and he sings:

Dead, long dead,
Long dead!
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,

The hoofs of the horses beat,
 Beat into my scalp and my brain,
 With never an end to the stream of passing feet,
 Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
 Clamor and rumble, and ringing and clatter,
 And here beneath it is all as bad,
 For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so,
 To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad?
 But up and down and to and fro,
 Ever about me the dead men go;
 And then to hear a dead man chatter
 Is enough to drive one mad.

But when the Crimean war breaks out, the hero is restored to reason, and "wakes to higher aims."

It is better to fight for the good, than to rail at the ill;
 I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
 I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assigned.

A critic says of this poem: "It is a lyric monologue, consisting of envious invective gradually mastered by love, then the idyllic joy of love, then anger, despair, madness, and patriotic enthusiasm. There is rush and motion enough in it; but the rush is that of a planet rather than that of a spirit. The movement is determined by the motive, and is not created by the motive; and the motive is not created by the will of the man moved. It is a helpless whirl of a man overmastered by a self-imposed necessity in the form of passion. Such overmastering fatality is a phase of poetical experience which some of the greatest poets have almost exclusively fastened upon. . . . The very bitterness of the hero of *Maud* is distilled out of his love for his father, and out of his patient self-sacrifice to the service of his widowed and waning mother. The love of Maud sweetens this bitterness; but her loss drives him back upon himself, and nurses his bitterness into madness."*

* *North British Review*, 1871.

Enoch Arden, published in 1865, is probably the best known of Tennyson's stories. The interest of this tale lies in the self-mastery and self-sacrifice of the hero, who, returning home after a ten years' absence, finds his wife wedded to another. Rather than disturb the happiness of the new home, he resigns his own hopes and forbears to reveal himself. The leading peculiarity of this little poem is the force of presentiment or forecast which runs through it from the beginning, where the two little boys who eventually become the husbands of Annie Lee are represented as quarreling for the little damsel.

In a narrow cave beneath the cliff the children played at keeping house.

Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,
While Annie still was mistress; but at times
Enoch would hold possession for a week:
"This is my house and this my little wife."
"Mine, too," said Philip, "turn and turn about."

And then

The little wife would weep for company,
And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,
And said she would be little wife to both.

These prophetic gleams of fatality permeate and give coloring to the entire poem, and add largely to the beauty and pathos of the narrative.

Aylmer's Field, published in 1864, is but another rendering of the old story so often told by Tennyson, and such a favorite with him—that of a conflict between pride and the affections. In this and the poem of *Enoch Arden* the reader may study that style of diction which is peculiarly Tennyson's own. Here we fail to find the imitations and affectations so plainly visible in the *Princess*, and the archaisms so plentiful in the *Idylls of the King*; but we discover, rather, the result of the poet's artistic study of real life and

of nature. Speaking of Mr. Tennyson's poetry, a recent critic says: "Of all the characteristics of his poems, perhaps the most general and most comprehensive is its youthfulness. It is not merely the poetry which the mature guardian would judge to be harmless for youths and maidens, but it is the poetry which is calculated to go most directly to the hearts of such unsophisticated readers. It is youthful in its metaphysics, in its religious views, in its views of nature, in its politics, in its social theories, and in its pathos. . . . The satisfaction of the mature reader will hardly stand the test of too much repetition, and still less of comparison with profounder poets. His characters come out not as real men, but as boys and girls acting the parts of men and women in their Christmas games. The words he puts into their mouths are full of beauty and refinement; but they illustrate only a narrow segment of that humanity which it is the privilege of poetry, at its highest power, to exhibit in myriad-sided completeness."

Although, as we have said, there are many beautiful stories in his poetry, it is not as a story-telling poet that we should study Tennyson, nor is it as such that he would wish to be remembered. But it is rather upon his skill as a writer of lyrics and of pure idyls, and upon the ornate delicacy of thought and feeling characteristic of all his poems, that his fame rests.

The most worthy successor of Chaucer is William Morris; and the most noble imitations—if imitations they may be called—of the *Canterbury Tales* are the stories contained in his *Earthly Paradise*. *The Earthly Paradise* was published between the years 1868 and 1871. The thread which serves for the stringing together of the twenty-four tales which compose the work is the narrative of "certain gentlemen and mariners of Norway, who, having considered all that they had heard of the Earthly Paradise, set sail to find it, and after many troubles and the lapse of many years came old men to some western land of which they had never before heard." There they were received and

honored by the strange people who lived in a certain city of that land; and as they sat "within a chamber fair, guests of that city's rulers,"

There spoke an ancient man, the land's chief priest,
Who said, "Dear guests, the year begins to-day,
And fain are we, before it pass away,
To hear some tales of that now altered world
Wherefrom our fathers in old time were hurled
By the hard hands of fate and destiny.
Nor would ye hear perchance unwillingly
How we have dealt with stories of the land
Wherein the tombs of our forefathers stand:
Wherefore henceforth two solemn feasts shall be
In every month, at which some history
Shall crown our joyance."

The tales which follow—two for every month—are some of the choicest and most famous legends of Grecian mythology and Norse mediæval romance, clothed in the most exquisite verse. "All these tales are familiar," says Swinburne, "but never before did they appear in more attractive shape, or fall so musically from a poet's honeyed mouth."

The following is the poet's explanation of the plan of his work:

The heavy trouble, the bewildering care
That weighs us down who live and earn our bread,
These idle verses have no power to bear;
So let me sing of names remembered,
Because they, living not, can ne'er be dead,
Or long time take their memory quite away
From us poor singers of an empty day.

Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,
Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?
Let it suffice me that my murmuring rhyme
Beats with light wing against the ivory gate,
Telling a tale not too importunate
To those who in the sleepy region stay,
Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

Folk say, a wizard to a northern king
At Christmas-tide such wondrous things did show,
That through one window men beheld the spring,
And through another saw the summer glow,
And through a third the fruited vines arow,
While still, unheard, but in its wonted way,
Piped the drear wind of that December day.

So with this Earthly Paradise it is,
If ye will read aright and pardon me,
Who strive to build a shadowy isle of bliss
Midmost the beating of the steely sea,
Where tossed about all hearts of men must be;
Whose ravening monsters mighty men shall slay,
Not the poor singer of an empty day.

Of the later school of English poets, William Morris stands at the head. Next to Chaucer he is without doubt the greatest of all story-telling poets. The worst fault that we can lay to his charge is that he is often tedious. His works have nothing of the restless, fiery movement which makes the poems of Scott so enjoyable. Nor does the beauty of his descriptions always make amends for his prolixity. Another criticism is that there is too much of a sameness in his characters. They all move and act upon the same elevated plane—a plane of poetic fancies and not of real life. And it is in this respect that he falls far below his great prototype about whose personages and their doings there is always an air of what might be termed every-day reality, and a variety of thought and action as great as there is in human nature itself.

In our own country, Mr. Longfellow, in the *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, has attempted to follow the plan of the *Canterbury Tales*. But one has only to compare his *Prelude* with Chaucer's *Prologue* to discover what a great distance lies between him and the great father of English story-tellers. We may confess that we like Longfellow best, because the language which he uses and the stories which

he relates are modern in form and such as we can understand and enjoy. But we must acknowledge that, so far as real poetical excellence is concerned, the palm must be awarded to Chaucer. In these poems, as in the *Canterbury Tales*, a company of rather a mixed character is represented as meeting at an inn.

Around the fireside at their ease
There sat a group of friends entranced
With the delicious melodies;
Who from the far-off noisy town
Had to the wayside inn come down,
To rest beneath the old oak-trees.
The fire-light on their faces glanced,
Their shadows on the wainscot danced,
And, though of different lands and speech,
Each had his tale to tell, and each
Was anxious to be pleased and please.

Let us place Longfellow's Landlord by the side of Chaucer's Host. Here is the Host:

A seemly man our hoste was with alle
For to han been a marshall in an halle.
A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgess is ther non in Chepe:
Bold of his speche, and wise and wel ytaught,
And of manhood him lacked righte naught.
Eke therto was he right a merry man.

And here is the Landlord:

Grave in his aspect and attire;
A man of ancient pedigree,
A Justice of the Peace was he
Known in all Sudbury as "The Squire."
Proud was he of his name and race,
Of old Sir William and Sir Hugh,
And in the parlor, full in view,
His coat-of-arms, well framed and glazed,
Upon the wall in colors blazed.

Compare the Student, too, with the Clerke of Oxenforde :

A youth there was of quiet ways,
 A Student of old books and days,
 To whom all tongues and lands were known,
 And yet a lover of his own ;
 With many a social virtue graced,
 And yet a friend of solitude ;
 A man of such a genial mood
 The heart of all things he embraced,
 He never found the best too good.
 Books were his passion and delight,
 And in his upper room at home
 Stood many a rare and sumptuous tome,
 In vellum bound, with gold bedight,
 Great volumes garmented in white,
 Recalling Florence, Pisa, Rome.

Then there was a young Sicilian from the sunny slopes
 of Mount Ætna. He was a reader of the poets, and next
 to those, he loved

The story-telling bard of prose,
 Who wrote the joyous Tuscan tales
 Of the Decameron, that make
 Fiesole's green hills and vales
 Remembered for Boccaccio's sake.

Next there was a Spanish Jew from Alicant, a learned
 peddler, grand and grave, who sold silks and attar of roses.
 Then a Theologian from Harvard College, who, like his
 prototype, the poor Parson, preached that it is the deed,
 and not the creed, which will "help us in our utmost
 need." Then the Poet, who sang not because he desired
 the praise of men, but because it was his nature to sing.
 Lastly, a Musician from Norway,

Who lived in that ideal world
 Whose language is not speech, but song.

* * * * *

And when he played, the atmosphere
Was filled with magic, and the ear
Caught echoes of that Harp of Gold,
Whose music had so weird a sound,
The hunted stag forgot to bound,
The leaping rivulet backward rolled,
The birds came down from bush and tree,
The dead came from beneath the sea,
The maiden to the harper's knee.

The first tale in the series is the Landlord's—the Revolutionary story of *Paul Revere*. *The Student's Tale* which follows, is a poetical rendering of the story of Federigo and his Falcon in the *Decameron*. *The Spanish Jew's Tale* is the legend of Rabbi Ben Levi from the Talmud. The Sicilian relates a story of King Robert of Sicily. The Musician sings to the accompaniment of his violin the *Saga of King Olaf*. The Theologian, in his story of Torquemada, tells of the Spanish Inquisition in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella; and the Poet closes by reciting a poem on the "merry birds of Killingworth." This was the evening's entertainment, and this composed the first series of *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. These poems were published in 1863, and nine years afterwards a second series appeared in which the same characters are represented as spending a rainy day in the inn and reciting stories similar in character to those included in the first series. There is nothing in the second collection, however, which is equal to *King Olaf's Saga*, nor is there anything which will attain to the popularity of *Paul Revere's Ride*.

But it is as an American poet, writing upon purely American subjects, that Longfellow will be remembered. Of his three longer poems, *Evangeline*, the first in point of time, is without doubt the first also in point of excellence. We shall attempt no analysis of the poem. No student of literature can omit to read and study it. In its metrical structure there is nothing like it in the English language. "The poem of *Evangeline* has really no place

in Anglo-Saxon poetry," says E. W. Gosse; "in Swedish it would accurately express a stage in the progress of literature which is now unfilled. It is known that Mr. Longfellow has cultivated the language of Sweden with much assiduity, and has contemplated literary life in that country with all the unconscious affection of a changeling." Here is Longfellow's description of *Evangeline*:

Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen summers.
 Black were her eyes as the berry that grows on the thorn by the
 wayside,
 Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath the brown shade of
 her tresses!
 Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine that feed in the meadows.

Compare this with what the Swedish poet Runeberg writes of one of his characters:

Blushing she stood at the door, in the exquisite charm of her
 shyness,
 Coy as a strip of the sea that is caught by the rush of the
 morning,
 Slender and quivering in rosy dismay through the gloom of the
 woodlands.*

Evangeline is sure of a permanent and honorable place in our national literature. It is a poem full of tender and exquisite feeling, and animated with the deepest, most sympathetic music. The quaint descriptions of the home-life of an old people in a new world, the charming pictures of natural scenery, the faithful delineations of character and passion, the sustained narrative of incidents—all these exhibit, in the highest degree, the true characteristics of

* Gosse's Translation.

Rodnande syntes hon der, i sin blyghet ljud till förundran:
 Lik en strimma af sjön, som, af morgenstralar begjuten,
 Smyger sig in och rodnar emellan skuggiga lunder.

Runeberg: *Hanna*, 1., 134-136.

poetry. Nowhere is there a picture more affecting or more full of pathetic beauty than that of Evangeline in her piteous wanderings in search of her lover. James Russell Lowell, in his *Fable for Critics*, says:

Had Theocritus written in English, not Greek,
I believe that his exquisite sense would scarce change a line
In that rare, tender, virgin-like pastoral Evangeline,
That's not ancient nor modern, its place is apart
Where Time has no sway, in the realm of pure Art,
'Tis a shrine of retreat from Earth's hubbub and strife
As quiet and chaste as the author's own life.

Of *The Song of Hiawatha* and of the *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, no one can speak except in terms of the highest praise. Concerning the former, an English critic remarks: "It is the first permanent contribution to the world's *belles lettres* made from Indian authorities. It is child-like as Indian life itself, yet possessing the vigor and daring of Tecumseh and the Mohican. The strong fibre of legend which joins and runs through the series of idyls of which it is made up unites like a cable of fancy the weird and pagan traditions of the frozen north of Europe and America."

The student can scarcely omit the study of the entire poem. But as an example of the author's happiest style of narration we quote the following passage descriptive of Hiawatha's wooing:

Thus departed Hiawatha
To the land of the Dacotahs,
To the land of handsome women;
Striding over moor and meadow,
Through interminable forests,
Through uninterrupted silence.
With his moccasins of magic,
At each stride a mile he measured;
Yet the way seemed long before him,
And his heart outrun his footsteps;

And he journeyed without resting,
Till he heard the cataract's laughter,
Heard the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to him through the silence.
"Pleasant is the sound!" he murmured,
"Pleasant is the voice that calls me!"

On the outskirts of the forest,
'Twixt the shadow and the sunshine,
Herds of fallow deer were feeding,
But they saw not Hiawatha;
To his bow he whispered, "Fail not!"
To his arrow whispered, "Swerve not!"
Sent it singing on its errand,
To the red heart of the roebuck
Threw the deer across his shoulder,
And sped forward without pausing.

At the doorway of his wigwam
Sat the ancient Arrow-maker
In the land of the Dacotahs,
Making arrow-heads of jasper,
Arrow-heads of chalcedony.
At his side, in all her beauty,
Sat the lovely Minnehaha,
Sat his daughter, Laughing Water,
Plaiting mats of flags and rushes;
Of the past the old man's thoughts were,
And the maiden's of the future.

He was thinking, as he sat there,
Of the days when with such arrows
He had struck the deer and bison,
On the Muskoday, the meadow;
Shot the wild-goose, flying southward,
On the wing, the clamorous Wawa;
Thinking of the great war-parties,
How they came to buy his arrows,
Could not fight without his arrows.
Ah, no more such noble warriors
Could be found on earth as they were!
Now the men were all like women,
Only used their tongues for weapons!

She was thinking of a hunter,
From another tribe and country,
Young and tall and very handsome,
Who one morning, in the Spring-time,
Came to buy her father's arrows,
Sat and rested in the wigwam,
Lingered long about the doorway,
Looking back as he departed.
She had heard her father praise him,
Praise his courage and his wisdom;
Would he come again for arrows
To the Falls of Minnehaha?
On the mat her hands lay idle,
And her eyes were very dreamy.

Through their thoughts they heard a footstep,
Heard a rustling in the branches,
And with glowing cheek and forehead,
With the deer upon his shoulders,
Suddenly from out the woodlands
Hiawatha stood before them.

Straight the ancient Arrow-maker
Looked up gravely from his labor,
Laid aside the unfinished arrow,
Bade him enter at the doorway,
Saying, as he rose to meet him,
"Hiawatha, you are welcome!"

At the feet of Laughing Water
Hiawatha laid his burden,
Threw the red deer from his shoulders;
And the maiden looked up at him,
Looked up from her mat of rushes,
Said with gentle look and accent,
"You are welcome, Hiawatha!"

Very spacious was the wigwam,
Made of deerskin dressed and whitened,
With the gods of the Dacotahs
Drawn and painted on its curtains,
And so tall the doorway, hardly
Hiawatha stooped to enter,

Hardly touched his eagle-feathers
As he entered at the doorway.

Then uprose the Laughing Water
From the ground, fair Minnehaha,
Laid aside her mat unfinished,
Brought forth food and set before them,
Water brought them from the brooklet,
Gave them food in earthen vessels,
Gave them drink in bowls of bass-wood,
Listened while the guest was speaking,
Listened while her father answered,
But not once her lips she opened,
Not a single word she uttered.

Yes, as in a dream she listened
To the words of Hiawatha,
As he talked of old Nokomis,
Who had nursed him in his childhood,
As he told of his companions,
Chibiabos, the musician,
And the very strong man, Kwasind,
And of happiness and plenty
In the land of the Ojibways,
In the pleasant land and peaceful.

"After many years of warfare,
Many years of strife and bloodshed,
There is peace between the Ojibways
And the tribe of the Dacotahs."
Thus continued Hiawatha,
And then added, speaking slowly,
"That this peace may last forever,
And our hands be clasped more closely,
And our hearts be more united,
Give me as my wife this maiden,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Loveliest of Dacotah women!"

And the ancient Arrow-maker
Paused a moment ere he answered,
Smoked a little while in silence,
Looked at Hiawatha proudly,

Fondly looked at Laughing Water,
And made answer very gravely:
"Yes, if Minnehaha wishes;
Let your heart speak, Minnehaha!"
And the lovely Laughing Water
Seemed more lovely, as she stood there,
Neither willing nor reluctant,
As she went to Hiawatha,
Softly took the seat beside him,
While she said, and blushed to say it,
"I will follow you, my husband!"
This was Hiawatha's wooing!
Thus it was he won the daughter
Of the ancient Arrow-maker,
In the land of the Dacotahs!

The *Courtship of Miles Standish* was published in 1858, and although inferior to any of the other longer works of Longfellow, is still not unworthy of his reputation. It is a story of Puritan sternness and self-denial, of love and self-sacrifice in

"The Old Colony days in Plymouth, the land of the Pilgrims."

An American speaks thus of Longfellow: "There is in the tone of his poetry little passion, but much quiet earnestness. His ideas and metaphors are often very striking and poetical, but there is no affluence of imagery or wonderful glow of emotion such as take us captive in Byron or Shelley; the claim of Longfellow consists rather in the wise and tasteful use of his materials than in their richness or originality. He illustrates the gentler themes of song, and pleads for justice, humanity, and particularly the beautiful, with a poet's deep conviction of their eternal claims upon the instinctive recognition of man."

And a writer in the *Westminster Review* says: "Longfellow's name is a household word in England. Not one of his contemporaries here has had a wider or longer supremacy on this side of the Atlantic; and for this we

may account chiefly by a reference to the very diffusive nature of his genius, and generally to his near assimilation to everything English. He is German in a different sense from that which we ascribe to Emerson. The country more than its poets influences him, although his translations of the poetry of Europe lead us to expect a varied and active principle of borrowed thought. His sight is neither feeble nor restricted, reaching from the splendor of the East to the midnight snows and frosts of the northern wolds. Yet there is a limpid glide of virtue, serene and beautiful, everywhere manifest. Longfellow dignifies and adorns charity; and both as a poet and scholar he is supreme in his modesty. He is the saunterer (in a strict sense) among the poets of the New World. His fancy is not mewed up in the backwoods or on the loamy shores of the Potomac. He is far-traveled, and in his wanderings he has divested himself of many Yankee predilections which find no favor out of the parent States. Every line he has written is silvered over with thought gleaned in the affluent realms of foreign literature. There is a finish and polish about most of his works quite unusual in contemporary productions; and the tone of his poems is unexceptionably chaste and elevated."

Returning to England, let us briefly notice a volume of poetic stories by Robert Browning, entitled *Dramatic Idyls*, published in 1878. Among the legends or idyls contained in this book is the story of Pheidippides, the great runner who took to Sparta within two days the news of the Persian invasion, and who returned to the Athenian camp only to announce the jealousy and indifference of the Spartans and their unwillingness to aid in repelling the invaders from Achaian soil. "The chief point of the legend is the story that Pheidippides came upon the god Pan—the god of of Arcadian and pastoral pleasures—in the course of his race, and received from the god a promise to assist Athens in the coming struggle, and a remonstrance with the Athenians for not having hitherto paid Pan due honors."

Then there is a story of two ruffians—father and son—who lived in North England and growled and quarreled with each other until at last, in an outburst of passion, the son orders the father to leave the house.

Still the old man stood mute. So, logwise—down to floor
Pulled from his fireside place, dragged on from hearth to door—
Was he pushed, a very log, staircase along, until
A certain turn in the steps was reached, a yard from the house-
door sill.

Then the old man opened his eyes, and in strangely humble tones begged his son to desist.

“Halbert, on such a night of a Christmas long ago,
For such a cause, with such a gesture, did I drag—so—
My father down thus far; but, softening here, I heard
A voice in my heart, and stopped: you wait for an outer word.

For your own sake, not mine, soften you too! Untrod
Leave this last step we reach, nor brave the finger of God!
I dare not pass its lifting; I did well. I nor blame
Nor praise you. I stopped here: Halbert, do you the same.”

The son relents and loosens his hold upon his father's throat, and both return silently to the room; and that night the old man breathes his last. And the son, from that time, “tottered, muttered, mumbled, till he died, perhaps found rest.”

“Is there a reason in nature for these hard hearts?” O Lear,
That a reason out of nature must turn them soft, seems clear!

Perhaps the finest of these idyls is the story of *Ivàn Ivànovitch*. It is the old Russian legend of the unnatural mother who to save herself from pursuing wolves sacrifices in succession to the ravenous animals her three children. Ivàn Ivànovitch, a peasant, learning of this fact, takes it upon himself to judge that a mother who thus violates the laws of nature and humanity is unfit to live.

And he assumes also the office and duties of executioner.
He commands the unhappy woman to kneel before him.

Down she sank. Solemnly
Ivàn rose, raised his axe—for fitly, as she knelt,
Her head lay: well apart, each side, her arms hung—dealt,
Lightning-swift, thunder-strong, one blow—no need of more!

* * * * *

The man was scant of words as strokes. "It had to be:
I could no other: God it was bade 'Act for me!'"

Then stooping, peering round—what is it now he lacks?

A proper strip of bark wherewith to wipe his axe.

Which done, he turns, goes in, closes the door behind.

* * * * *

While the youngsters raised the corpse, the elders trooped

Silently to the house: where, halting, some one stooped,

Listened beside the door; all there was silent, too.

Then they held counsel; then pushed door, and, passing through,

Stood in the murderer's presence.

Ivàn Ivànovitch

Knelt, building on the floor that Kremlin rare and rich

He deftly cut and carved on lazy winter nights.

Some five young faces watched, breathlessly, as, to rights,

Piece upon piece, he reared the fabric nigh complete.

Stéscha, Ivàn's old mother, sat spinning by the heat

Of the oven where his wife Kàtia stood baking bread.

Ivàn's self, as he turned his honey-colored head,

Was just in act to drop, 'twixt fir-cones—each a dome—

The scooped-out yellow gourd presumably the home

Of Kolokol the Big: the bell, therein to hitch—

An acorn-cup—was ready: Ivàn Ivànovitch

Turned with it in his mouth.

They told him he was free

As air to walk abroad. "How otherwise?" asked he.

The only other idyl in this collection worthy of special mention is the story of Ned Bratts and his wife Tab, the wicked keepers of an inn in Bedford, who are converted by the preaching of John Bunyan and by the simple power

of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. The following is the wife's version of the sermon which wrought in her so wonderful a change of heart:

Then all at once rose he :

His brown hair burst a-spread, his eyes were suns to see :
Up went his hands : " Through flesh, I reach, I read thy soul !
So may some stricken tree look blasted, bough and bole,
Champed by the fire-tooth, charred without, and yet thrice bound,
With dreriment about, within may life be found,
A prisoned power to branch and blossom as before,
Could but the gardener cleave the cloister, reach the core.
Loosen the vital sap : yet where shall help be found ?
Who says, ' How save it ? ' nor ' Why cumber's it the ground ?'
Woman, that tree art thou ! All sloughed about with scurf,
Thy stag-horns fright the sky, thy snake-roots sting the turf !
Drunkenness, wantonness, theft, murder, gnash and gnarl
Thine outward, ease thy soul with coating like the marle
Satan stamps flat upon each head beneath his hoof !
And how deliver such ? The strong men keep aloof,
Lover and friend stand far, the mocking ones pass by,
Tophet gapes wide for prey : lost soul, despair and die !
What then ? ' Look unto me and be ye saved ! ' saith God ;
' I strike the rock, outstreets the life-stream at my rod !
Be your sins scarlet, wool shall they seem like—although
As crimson red, yet turn white as the driven snow ! ' "

A critic, writing of this volume, says : " The subjects are, as is usual with Mr. Browning, startling subjects. He not only loves to flash his weird figures upon the imagination with all the suddenness and abruptness of a magic-lantern, but to present you with a subject that takes your breath away as much by the singularity of its attitude as by the suddenness of its appearance. He rejects purposely the shading and the moral atmosphere which make the grimmiest subjects seem natural when they are given in connection with all the conditions of their history and origin, for his object is to make you see the wonder of the world rather than its harmony, or the context which,

partly at least, explains it. But assuming, as the critic always must assume, the poet's special bent and genius, there is nothing specially harsh in this volume, and much that is really powerful, while the harshest pictures in it are lent a touch of grandeur by the purpose which penetrates the life portrayed."*

SHORT STORIES AND JUVENILE PIECES.

In this division are numerous poetical pieces of almost every degree of merit. We can notice only a few. Some are so well known that the mere mention of their titles will recall them to the memory of every student. Such, for instance, is Wordsworth's *We are Seven*, the first stanza of which was written by Coleridge. The simple little story of *Alice Fell* is also well known. The following poems, by the same author, will repay the trouble of reading: *Michael*, *The Brothers*, *The Old Cumberland Beggar*, *Resolution and Independence*, *Lucy Gray*, *The Two April Mornings*. Some of Mrs. Hemans's poems may also be included in this division. Every schoolboy has read her little verse-story *Casabianca*, a production whose poetical merits are, to say the least, decidedly feeble. Mrs. Browning's *Romance of the Swan's Nest* is one of the most charming little pieces to be met with in our language. Among the shorter verse-stories of Tennyson we may mention *Dora*, *The Miller's Daughter*, *The Lady of Shalott*, and *Lady Clare*. Robert Browning's *How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix* and his *Pied Piper of Hamelin* are well known. So also are Longfellow's *Skeleton in Armor* and *The Village Blacksmith*; Whittier's *Barefoot Boy*, *Maud Muller*, *Barbara Frietchie*, *Flud Ireson*, and many others.

Some of the pleasantest poems of this class have been written by William and Mary Howitt. These writers, although they are by no means great poets, have shown in their works very much of the true poetic inspiration, and

* *Spectator*, 1879.

many of their productions have won an honorable abiding-place in English literature. "The history of our poetical bias," they remark in the preface to one of their volumes, "is simply what we believe, in reality, to be that of many others. Poetry has been our youthful amusement, and our increasing daily enjoyment in happy, and our solace in sorrowful hours. Amidst the vast and delicious treasures of our national literature, we have reveled with growing and unsatiated delight; and, at the same time, living chiefly in the quietness of the country, we have watched the changing features of nature; we have felt the secret charm of those sweet but unostentatious images which she is perpetually presenting, and given full scope to those workings of the imagination and of the heart which natural beauty and solitude prompt and promote. The natural result was the transcription of those images and scenes." *The Fairies of the Caldon-Low* is one of the most delightful of their verse-stories. We quote the opening stanzas:

" And where have you been, my Mary,
And where have you been from me?"
" I've been to the top of the Caldon-Low,
The midsummer night for to see."

" And what did you see, my Mary,
All up in the Caldon-Low?"
" I saw the blithe sunshine come down,
And I saw the merry winds blow."

Poetry for Children, by Charles and Mary Lamb, is the title of a collection of pleasant and instructive verses for the young, first published in 1809. The original edition of this collection very strangely disappeared in 1812, and until 1877 not a copy of the work was known to be in existence. In the latter year, however, a volume containing the poems entire was discovered in Australia, and from it an American edition was printed. The titles of a few of the pieces will sufficiently indicate their character:

Going into Breeches; Choosing a Name; Cleanliness; Choosing a Profession; The First of April; Men, Women, and Monkeys, etc. There are in this collection several highly humorous and really poetical pieces, intermixed with some severe moralizing upon topics of rather an antiquated and sometimes gloomy nature.

REFERENCES.

HISTORICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS STUDIES.

THE student should thoroughly acquaint himself with the history of England from the time of the Conquest to the close of the fourteenth century. Besides the works mentioned in preceding lists, let him read Froissart's *Chronicles* (abridged edition); also Pierson's *England in the Fourteenth Century*; Longman's *History of Edward I.* (London, 1869).

He should make some acquaintance with the literary history of Italy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. He should learn about the lives and works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, and endeavor to understand their subsequent influence upon English literature.

For Dante, see Symond's *Introduction to the Study of Dante* (London, 1873); Emerson's *Representative Men*; Lowell's *Among My Books*; Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (London, 1841); *Dante as Philosopher, Patriot, and Poet*, by Vincenzo Botta (New York, 1865); Sismondi's *Literature of the South of Europe* (Bohn); Longfellow's translation of the *Divina Commedia* (1867-1870).

For Petrarch, see Campbell's *Life of Petrarch*; *The Sonnet: Its Origin, Structure, and Place in Poetry*, by Charles Tomlinson; Sismondi's *Literature*.

For Boccaccio, see Sismondi's *Literature*.

LITERARY STUDIES.

CHAUCER: Warton's *History of English Poetry*; Lowell's *My Study Windows*; Marsh's *Origin and History of the English Language*; *The Riches of Chaucer*, by Charles Cowden Clarke; Chaucer's *Prologue and Knightes Tale*, edited by R. Morris; Morley's *English Writers*, Vol. II.; Carpenter's *English of the Fourteenth Century*; Hazlitt's *English Poets*; Coleridge's *Table Talk*; *An Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer*, by Thomas Tyrwhitt; Taine's *English Literature*; *Canterbury Chimes*, by Storr and Turner; *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales Explained*, by Saunders; *Stories from Old English Poetry*, by Mrs. Richardson.

COLERIDGE: Hazlitt's *English Poets*; Swinburne's *Studies and Essays*; Leigh Hunt's *Imagination and Fancy*; Shairp's *Studies in Poetry*; Carlyle's *Life of John Sterling*; Carlyle's *Reminiscences*; Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*.

CRABBE: Jeffrey's *Essays*; Roscoe's *Essays*.

KEATS: Jeffrey's *Essays*; *The Life of Keats*, by Lord Houghton; Matthew Arnold's *Essay on Keats* in Ward's *English Poets*. Read Shelley's *Adonais*.

CAMPBELL: Jeffrey's *Essays*; Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age*.

TENNYSON: Kingsley's *Miscellanies*; Hutton's *Essays*; Stedman's *Victorian Poets*; Hadley's *Essays*.

MORRIS: Stedman's *Victorian Poets*; Swinburne's *Essays and Studies*.

LONGFELLOW: Before reading *Evangeline*, study the history of the French in America. An account of the removal of the Acadians is given in the fourth volume of Bancroft's *United States*. Before reading *Miles Standish*, study the history of the Pilgrims at Plymouth.

CHAPTER V.

ALLEGORIES.

Definitions—Anglo-Saxon Allegories—The Vision of Piers Plowman—Roman de la Rose—Chaucer's Romaunt of the Rose—The Court of Love—The Cuckow and the Nightingale—The Parlament of Foules—The Flower and the Leaf—The Book of the Duchess, and Chaucer's Dream—The House of Fame—William Dunbar's The Thistle and the Rose—The Golden Terge—Dance of the Deadly Sins—Stephen Hawes—Grand Amour and la Bel Pucell—Sackville's Introduction to the Mirror for Magistrates—Edmund Spenser—The Faerie Queene—John Bunyan—The Pilgrim's Progress—Phineas Fletcher's Purple Island—Thomson's Castle of Indolence—Tennyson's Vision of Sin—Abou ben Adhem—Lowell's Vision of Sir Launfal—Other Short Allegories—Fables: Gay's Fables—Burns's Twa Dogs and The Briggs of Ayr—A Fable by Leigh Hunt.

AN allegory is a narrative in which abstract ideas are represented by figures. Allegory usually appears in the personification of human qualities, but it includes also the metaphorical use of words and forms to designate subjects to which they are not properly applicable. Allegories are of three classes: the allegory proper, the parable, and the fable. With respect to their meaning and purpose, they may be didactic or satirical. The taste for allegory was very early developed in literature; indeed, its origin may be traced in the primitive myths of our ancestors. The difference between a myth and an allegory, according to Worcester, is that while the former "springs up spontaneously and by an act of inspiration," the latter is "a reflective and artificial process." We have elsewhere spoken of the allegorical poems which were written during the Anglo-Saxon period and preserved in the Vercelli and Exeter manuscripts. We find the use of allegorical prose still earlier; for the Venerable Bede in describing Solo-

mon's temple shows how each part may be interpreted as representing some moral truth—for instance, that the windows are the teachers of holiness through whom the light of heaven enters, and that the cedar from the mountains of Lebanon represents the incorruptible virtues of the pure in heart. During the Middle Ages the use of allegory in interpreting the meaning of Scripture was very generally resorted to. In fact, as Morley says, "We find the taste for allegory coloring almost the whole texture of European literature and remaining for a long time dominant."

The first poetical allegory of any special note in our literature is Langland's *Vision of Piers Plowman*, which we have described in the chapter on the poetry of the Transition Period. This work is essentially satirical in its purpose, and its ridicule is directed against the vices and corruptions of the church and the State. The allegorical form of the poem was probably chosen from the fact that this had already become the favorite form in which to disguise and announce severe or otherwise unpalatable truths, and that the double-meaning which it carried with it might afford a means of retreat to the writer in case he should be involved in difficulties. "There is no doubt," says Marsh, "that this poem planted deep in the English mind the germ of that religious revolution which was so auspiciously begun and perfected in the sixteenth century, as well as of the political reforms which followed a hundred years later." Regarded in this light, the study of the allegory becomes doubly interesting and important.

The allegory early became a favorite form of composition with the romance writers of France. About the middle of the thirteenth century, Guillaume de Lorris, a Trouvère, began a long allegorical love-poem called *Roman de la Rose*. That part of the poem known to have been written by Lorris closes abruptly at the end of the 4030th line; and whether this break was made intentionally by the author, or was caused by his death, or whether the remaining por-

tion has been lost, it is impossible to determine. Forty years later a continuation was written by Jean de Meung, who added 18,000 lines, without, however, catching either the spirit or the idea of his predecessor. The part written by Lorris is noted for its picturesqueness, its brilliancy of description, and its faithful character-painting—nothing more. The part added by Meung is satirical and aggressive, attacking earnestly and with boldness the social manners of the time and sparing neither church nor State. This allegory is interesting to us from the fact that to it Chaucer owed much of his earlier inspiration; and its nomenclature probably suggested to Spenser the characters of his *Faerie Queene*. "This poem," says Warton, "is esteemed by the French the most valuable piece of their old poetry. It is far beyond the rude efforts of all their preceding romances; and they have nothing equal to it before the reign of Francis I., who died in the year 1547."

Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose* is a translation of the famous French allegory. It consists of nearly 8000 lines, including the whole of the part written by Lorris and about one-fifth of Meung's addition. In this poem we are transported to the Garden of Love, in which Pleasure is the presiding genius. The only entrance to the garden is through a small gate, which is opened by Leisure only to such as are deserving of admittance; hence, Poverty, Idleness, Villainy, Greed, Hate, Felony, Avarice, Sorrow, Old Age, Pope Holy, and Hypocrisy are excluded, and only such characters as Beauty, Pleasure, Jollity, Wealth, Liberality, Courtesy, Youth, and Love are allowed entrance. The Rose, which gives name to the poem, is the emblem of loveliness. The lover meets with many adventures, being alternately aided and retarded in his undertakings by the personages who surround him. He learns at the fountain of Narcissus to avoid the fate of those who regard Love lightly; then Love himself pierces him with his arrows, and tells him how he may gain the object of his desire, and Good Reception cheers him forwards and ena-

bles him, by eluding Authority, to arrange an interview. But at this point Jealousy steps in between him and the Rose, Good Reception is thrown into prison, and the lover is left sighing at the foot of the tower.

The opening of the *Romaunt* is somewhat similar to the first lines of the *Canterbury Tales*:

. . . In tyme of love and jolité
 That al thing gynneth waxen gay,
 For ther is neither busk nor hay
 In May, that it n'ill shrouded bene
 And it with newe leves wrene. . . .
 Then doth the nightingale her might
 To maken noyse and singen blithe.
 Than is blisfull many a sithe
 The chelaundre and the papyngay. . . .
 Harde is his heart that loveth nought
 In May, when all this love is wrought,
 When he may on these braunches here
 The smalle birdes singen clere
 Hir blisfull swete song piteous.*

Chaucer's first original allegory—perhaps, indeed, his first work—was *The Court of Love*, “an imitation of the *Romaunt of the Rose*, showing that all are subject to love, what impediments soever to the contrary; containing also those twentie statutes which are to be observed in the Court of Love.” The author is represented as “Philogenet, of Cambridge, clerke,” who at the age of eighteen is possessed with a desire to seek the Court of Love. He describes his journey thither:

So than I went by strange and fer coustrees,
 Enquiring aye what coast had to it drew
 The Court of Love; and thiderward as bees,
 At last I see the people gan pursue;
 And methought some wight was there that knew

* *Romaunt of the Rose*, 52-56, and 79 seq.

Where that court was holden ferre or nie,
And after them full fast I gan to hie.*

Soon he came in sight of the castle wherein the court
was held :

Yet saw I never none so large and hie ;
For unto heaven it stretcheth, I suppose,
Within and out depeinted wonderly,
With many a thousand daisies rede as rose,
And white also, this saw I verely.†

There Venus was worshiped, but Admetus and Alcestis
were King and Queen of Love,

To whom obeyed the ladies good ninetene,
With many a thousand other bright of face.

The daisy, he says, was sacred to the queen. With its heart of gold and its white crown of innocence and its modest grace, it is the type of the true and pure wife. Why Admetus and Alcestis are represented as king and queen, the student who is acquainted with Greek mythology will have no difficulty in understanding. Admetus, one of the Argonauts, loved Alcestis, the fair daughter of Pelias, and besought her father for her hand in marriage. To this old Pelias agreed on condition that he should come to claim his bride in a chariot drawn by lions and wild boars. The condition was gladly accepted and fulfilled by Admetus ; but he had forgotten to sacrifice to Diana, and hence he found in the bridal-chamber not the lovely Alcestis, but a bundle of writhing snakes. Apollo appeased the angry goddess and secured for Admetus exemption from death on condition that some one who was dear to him should die for him. Alcestis willingly consented to suffer for him ; but Hercules afterwards restored her to life and to Admetus. This myth is but one of the spontaneous allegories of the Greeks, and typifies true marriage and

* *Court of Love*, 56-63.

† *Ibid.*, 98-102.

conjugal devotion. But to return to the *Court of Love*. Philogenet, upon his arrival at the castle, is conducted to the temple where he sees Venus and Cupid, and where he swears allegiance to the queen and obedience to the twenty statutes of love. Then, following the poetical custom of the Troubadours, he is presented to Lady Rosiall, with whom he has become enamored in a dream. The poem closes with the celebration of the Festival of Love on May-day, wherein the birds are represented as chanting in honor of the god of love a parody of the Catholic matin service for Trinity Sunday.

To matens went the lusty nightingale. . . .
 And "*Domine labia*," gan he cry and gale,
 "My lippes open lord of love I cry,
 And let my mouth thy praising now bewry."

The eagle sang, "*Venite*, bodies all,
 And let us joy to love that is our health." . . .
 Then sayd the faucon, our own hertes wealth,
 "*Domine Dominus noster* I wote,
 Ye be the god that done us brenne thus hote."

"*Coeli enarrant*," said the popingay,
 "Your might is told in heaven and firmament."

And then came in the goldfinch freshe and gay,
 And said this psalme with hertily glad intent,
 "*Domini est terra*," this laten intent,
 The god of love hath yerth in governaunce:
 And then the wren gan skippen and to daunce.
 "*Jube Domino* O lord of love, I pray
 Commaund me well this lesson for to rede." . . .
 The turtil dove said, "Welcom, welcom May,
 Gladsom and light to lovers that ben trew." . . .
 And than "*Tu autem*," sang he all apart.

"*Te deum amoris*," sang the throstel-cocke;
 Tubal himself, the first musician,
 With key of armony coude not onlocke,
 So swete tewne as that the throstel can:

"The lorde of love we praysen," (quod he), than
 And so done al the foules greate and lite,
 "Honor we May, in fals lovers dispite."

"*Dominus regnavit*," said the pecocke there. . . .
 Out sterte the owle with "*Benedicite*." . . .
 "*Laudate*," sang the larke with voice ful shril,
 And eke the kight "*O admirabile*." . . .
 "*Amen*," said al, and so said eke the pie.
 And forth the cockow gan procede anon,
 With "*Benedictus*" thanking God in hast,
 That in this May would visite them echon,
 And gladden them al while the feast shal last.
 And therewithal a laughter out he brast,
 "I thanke it God that I should end the song,
 And all the service which hath ben so long."*

The Cuckow and the Nightingale is a short allegory in which "Chaucer dreameth that hee heareth the cuckow and the nightingale contend for excellencie in singing." The idea may have been suggested by the older poem of *The Owl and the Nightingale*, a piece of transition poetry belonging to the twelfth century. The cuckoo and the nightingale dispute about the blessings of love, the former declaring it to be full of misery, the latter asserting that it is full of pleasure. The nightingale sings so loudly that the poet can bear to hear the cuckoo no more.

Me thought then that I stert out anon,
 And to the broke I ran and gate a ston,
 And at the Cuckow hertely I cast;
 And he for drede fle away ful fast,
 And glad was I when that he was gon.†

The nightingale thanks him, and says:

Every day this May or thou dine,
 Go looke upon the fresh daisie,

* *Court of Love*, 1353 seq.

† *The Cuckow and the Nightingale*, 216-220.

And though thou be for wo in point to die,
 That shal full greatly lessen thee of thy pine.
 And looke alway that thou be good and trew,
 And I woll sing one of the songes new
 For love of thee, as loud as I may crie.*

It is then decided that a parliament of the birds shall be held on the day after St. Valentine's Day, at which this vexed question of love must be decided. The poem may thus be regarded as an introduction to *The Parliament of Foules*.

In the *Parlament of Foules* the poet represents himself as reading from the sixth book of Cicero's treatise on *The Republic* that part which relates to Scipio's dream on the immortality of the soul. The fifth to the twelfth stanza of the poem includes an abstract of that famous production which had already had a wide influence among the scholars of the Middle Ages. Sixteen stanzas—from the twenty-seventh to the forty-first—are translated quite literally from Boccaccio's *La Teseide*. The general plan of the poem seems to have been suggested by a Latin work of the thirteenth century entitled *The Complaint of Nature*, and written by one Alain de l'Isle. A passage in that book describes "Nature's changing robe as being so ethereal that it is like air, and the pictures on it seem to the eye like a Council of Animals." Chaucer, in the fourth stanza, makes the following reference to his indebtedness to other books:

For out of the old felde as men saithe,
 Cometh al this new corne fro yere to yere,
 And out of old bookes, in good faithe,
 Cometh al this new science that men lere.

The subject of the allegory is a debate between the birds to decide the claims of three *tercel* eagles for the possession of a beautiful *formel* (female) of the same species, which Nature holds on her hand. After the birds there assem-

* *Ibid.*, 242-248.

bled have each given an opinion in regard to the suit, Nature decides that the formel "herselfe shall have her election," counseling her, however, to take the royal tercel "as for the gentilest and most worthy." She answers that she would prefer to wait a year; and Nature therefore consoles the three suitors with the remark,

"A yere is not so long to endure ;"

and the assembly is soon dispersed.

I woke, and other bookes took me to,
To rede upon, and yet I rede alway,
I hope ywis to rede so some day,
That I shall mete something for to fare
The bet, and thus to rede I nill not spare,

says Chaucer in conclusion. And then we find him penning another exquisite little allegory, perhaps the finest of all, entitled *The Flower and the Leaf*. Its general plan is thus stated in a note prefixed by its first editor:

"A gentlewoman, out of an arbour in a grove, seeth a great companie of knights and ladies in a daunce upon the greene grasse: the which being ended, they all kneele doune and do honour to the daisie, some to the flower, and some to the leafe. Afterwards this gentlewoman learneth by one of these ladies the meaning hereof, which is this: They which honour the flower, a thing fading with every blast, are such as looke after beautie and worldly pleasure. But they that honour the leafe, which abideth with the root, notwithstanding the frosts and winter stormes, are they which follow vertue and during qualities, without regard of worldly respects." It is explained in the poem that the white queen and her party represent Chastity; the knights the Nine Worthies; the cavaliers crowned with laurel the Knights of the Round Table, the Peers of Charlemagne, and the Knights of the Garter. The queen and the ladies in green represent Flora and the followers

of sloth and idleness. The following interpretation of the allegory has been offered by a late writer: "the *Flower and the Leaf* represent two of the badges usual in mediæval heraldry. A flower, the rose, is the badge of England; a leaf, the shamrock, is the badge of Ireland. In Chaucer's time there was a current argument in chivalry as to the relative significance of leaves and flowers. At the wedding of Philippa, daughter of John of Gaunt, with King John I., of Portugal, a poet wrote a poem in honor of Philippa, giving to the flower superiority over the leaf as having fairer scent, color, and promise of fruit. Chaucer, as an offset to this, from the English side, wrote the *Flower and the Leaf* in compliment to the bridegroom."

M. Taine, writing of this poem, says: "Is this allegory? There is at least a lack of wit. There is no ingenious enigma; it is dominated by fancy, and the poet thinks only of displaying in quiet verse the fleeting and brilliant train which had amused his mind and charmed his eye."

The Book of the Duchess and *Chaucer's Dream* are two allegorical poems, long supposed, on account of their similarity of style and versification, to be parts of the same poem. They refer to the courtship of John of Gaunt, and to his grief at the loss of his first wife, the Duchess Blanche. In *Chaucer's Dream* there are thought to be some remote allusions to his own courtship and marriage.

The last of Chaucer's allegories, and the one which excels in brilliancy of description and variety of humor, is *The House of Fame*. It is written in Trouvère octo-syllabic measure, and bears other traces of both French and Italian influences. The object of the allegory is to show "how the deedes of all men and women, be they good or bad, are carried by report to posteritie." The idea of the temple was doubtless derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. An eagle, which soars near the sun, suddenly pounces upon the poet and carries him above the stars, dropping him at last before the House of Fame. The temple or house is built on a high and almost inaccessible mountain of

ice. The names of great men are engraven upon it; but those on the south side are constantly melted away by the heat of the sun, while those on the north endure. On the turrets appear the minstrels and great harpers of all time, and there are myriads of musicians behind them. Within, the hall is plated with gold overlaid with pearls, and upon a dazzling throne sits the queen or goddess of Fame. From the throne to the doorway are rows of pillars of metal on which stand the great historians and poets. Josephus, "that of Jewes gestes told," stands on one of lead and iron; Statius, "that bare of Thebes up the name," stands on one of iron painted with tigers' blood; Virgil, that "hath bore up a long while the fame of pious Eneas," stands on a pillar of tinned iron; Ovid, "Venus's clerk," on one of copper; "Dan Lucan," and all the clerks that wrote of Rome's mighty works, on pillars of iron; and

Next him on a pillar stood,
Of sulphur liche as he were wood,
Dan Claudian, sothe for to tell
That bare up all the fame of Hell.

From this place the poet is conducted to the temple, or labyrinth, of Rumor—a strange building sixty miles in length, and with doors as numerous as the leaves on the trees. The inhabitants are chiefly sailors, pilgrims, and pardoners, who spend all their time in hearing and telling the news. While in the midst of his description of this temple, the author is awakened, and the poem closes abruptly.

Pope, in his *Temple of Fame*, has attempted an imitation of this allegory. The student should compare the original with the imitation, and determine which excels in description and in richness of fancy. We give a single passage from each:

And up I clambe with moch payne,
And though to climbe greeved me,
Yet I ententife was to see,

And for to poren wondre low,
 If I coude any wise yknow
 What maner stone this roche was,
 For it was like a limed glas,
 But that it shone ful more clere,
 But of what congeled matere
 It was, I n'iste redely,
 But at the last espied I,
 And found that it was everydele,
 A roche of yse and not of stele.

CHAUCER, III., 28-40.

High on a rock of ice the structure lay,
 Steep its ascent, and slippery was the way;
 The wondrous rock like Parian marble shone,
 And seem'd, to distant sight, of solid stone.
 Inscriptions here of various names I view'd,
 The greater part by hostile Time subdued;
 Yet wide was spread their fame in ages past,
 And poets once had promised they should last.

POPE, 27-35.

Very similar in tone and manner to some of Chaucer's allegories is *The Thistle and the Rose*, by William Dunbar, a Scotch poet. It was written in honor of the marriage of James IV., of Scotland, with Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII., of England. The poem is carefully constructed after its Chaucerian models, not only as to the versification, but also as to the narration. It opens with reference to spring, the varying winds of March, the silvery showers of April, and the birds and flowers of May.

In bed at morrow sleeping as I lay,
 Methought Aurora, with her crystal ene
 In at the window looked by the day,
 And hailed me with a visage pale and grene;
 On whose hand a lark sang, fro the splene,
 "Awake, lovers, out of your slumbering,
 See how the lusty morrow doth upspring!"

Methought fresh May before my bed upstood,
 In weeds depaint of many diverse hue,
 Sober, benign and full of mansuetude,
 In bright attire of flowers forged new,
 Heavenly of color, white, red, brown and blue,
 Balmed in dew, and gilt with Phebus' beams;
 While all the house, illumined by her, gleams.

May then rebukes the poet for not rising earlier, and bids him be up and perform his annual homage to the flowers, the birds, and the sun, by writing something in her honor. The sun then rises in the Orient and shines "so wonder clear, that all the world took comfort far and near." Then the birds begin to sing: "Hail, May; hail, Flora; hail, Aurora bright; hail, Princess Nature; hail, Venus, love's queen." And Nature commands that Neptune and Eolus shall place no more hinderances in the way of Spring's progress. She also summons everything to appear in her presence and to acknowledge her sovereignty. All the animals are assembled before her. First of the beasts came the Lion, in whom the poet meant to typify Scotland, and whom he describes as he appeared on the Scottish arms:

Red was his color as the ruby glance,
 In field of gold he stood full mightily,
 With fleur de luces circled lustily.

He is crowned with a radiant diadem of precious stones, and declared king of all beasts. The Eagle, which typifies England, is likewise crowned king of all birds. Then the Thistle, which represents King James, being surrounded with a bush of spears, and therefore ready for war, is crowned with rubies and bidden to go forth "into the field and fend the laif,"—defend the rest. Lastly, the Rose, the Princess Margaret, is crowned with clarified gems, the splendor of which illumines the whole land. The merle, the lark, the nightingale, all join in singing her praises, and in so doing wake the poet from his dream.

Another allegory, written by the same author, is *The Golden Terge*. It was one of the first works printed in Scotland, being issued from the press of Chepman & Myllar—the first set up in that country—in 1508. It is a close imitation of Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose* in both style and imagery. We have in it the usual spring morning, the rising sun, and the singing birds. The poet, lulled by the music of nature, falls asleep among the flowers. In a dream he sees a ship approaching, the sails of which are white as "the blossom upon the spray," and the masts are of gold, "bright as the star of day." She comes to land in the blooming meadows, and a hundred ladies in green kirtles step on shore. In this company the poet sees Nature, Queen Venus, the fresh Aurora, Lady May, the shining Flora, Diana, goddess of the chase, Lady Clio, Juno, Latona, Minerva, and others. They enter a garden where May, the queen of the mirthful months, receives from Nature a gorgeous robe,

Rich to behold and noble of renown,
Of every hue that under the heaven has been
Depaint, and broad by good proportion.

Then another group appears. Cupid, "with his dreadful arrows, sharp and square," presides. And Mars, strong and corpulent, Saturn, "old and hoar," and Mercury, wise and eloquent, all are there arrayed in green, and playing and singing while the ladies dance. The poet, pressing forward from his hiding-place among the flowers, is seen by Venus, who orders her "keen archers" to arrest him. The ladies at once let fall their green mantles and advance against him, each holding a huge bow. First in the attack comes Beauty, followed by Fair Having, and Portraiture, and Pleasaunce, and Lusty Cheer. Then Reason rushes to the rescue, bearing a shield of gold, the "golden terge." Beauty, and tender Youth, Green Innocence, Modesty, and Obedience are unable to harm the golden shield. Then Womanhood comes to the attack, leading

with her Patience, Discretion, Steadfastness, Benign Look, Mild Cheer, and Honest Business.

But Reason bare the Terge with sic constance,
Their sharp essay might do me no deirance.

Dignity, Renown, Riches, Nobility, and Honor, after displaying their "high bänner," and shooting a cloud of arrows, are obliged to retreat. At length Dissimulation, with Presence, Fair Calling, and Cherishing, as her archers, leads the attack. Presence throws a magical powder into the eyes of Reason, who reels like a drunken man and is banished to the greenwood. The poet, no longer protected by the golden terge, receives a deadly wound, and is at once taken prisoner by Beauty. Then "Eolus his bugle blows," the fair company flee in haste to the ship and sail away. But as they fire a parting salute from the ordnance on board, the roar of which is re-echoed by the rocks "with a sound as if the rainbow had been broken," the poet awakes and breaks out at once into an encomium on Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate. And this is what he says of Chaucer:

O reverend Chaucer, rose of rhetorics all,
As in our tongue a flower imperial
That raise in Britain ever, who reads right,
Thou bearest of poets the triumph royall:
Thy fresh, enamelled terms celestial
This matter could have shownfull bright:
Was thou nocht of our English all the light,
Surmounting every tongue terrestrial
As far as Mayes morrow does midnight.*

Dunbar's *Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins* is the first intimation that we have of a departure from the worn-out models of Chaucer and the romance poets. It is the first example, too, of comic satire veiled in allegory. Mahomet,

* Warton's *History of English Poetry*, p. 500.

or the devil, commands a dance to be performed by the fiends who have never made concessions to a priest. These immediately appear and begin the performance of a masque or mummery "just imported from France." Pride, Anger, Envy, Avarice, Sloth, Lust, and Gluttony are each painted in glaring but faithful colors. In this infernal dance no minstrels play, for no poet or gleeman ever went to hell "except one who committed murder, and was admitted *by brief of richt*."

The poem abounds in vivid description mingled with coarse humor and fantastic, even terrible, representations. Morley says of Dunbar: "No poet, from Chaucer till his own time, equaled him in the range of his genius. He could pass from broad jest to a pathos truer for its homeliness; he had a play of fancy reaching to the nobler heights of thought; a delicacy joined with a terse vigor of expression in short poems, that put the grace of God into their wordly wisdom."

Two other Scotch poets are deserving of mention here,—Gawain Douglas and Sir David Lindsay. Douglas was the author of two allegories, *The Palace of Honour*, a court poem dedicated to King James IV., and written in the usual "May morning" style, and a shorter but more original production entitled *King Hart*, in which the life and heart of man are personified and treated allegorically. Lindsay produced several allegorical works, some didactic and others satirical. Chief among these are *Lindsay's Dream*, *The Complaint*, and *The Testament of the Papingo*. The last was written in 1530.

The Ship of Fools, by Alexander Barclay, a satirical allegory of small merit, will be spoken of in the chapter on Satire.

Stephen Hawes, a poet who lived in the reign of Henry VII., attempted several imitations of Chaucer's allegories. His *Temple of Glass* is but a paraphrase of Chaucer's *House of Fame*, very similar to Pope's *Temple of Fame*. His best work is *The Pastime of Pleasure; or, the History of Grand*

Amoure and la Bel Pucell: "contayning the knowledge of the seven sciences, and the course of man's lyfe in this worlde." It is dedicated to King Henry VII., and was probably finished in 1506. It is an allegory written in the old form, and with the inevitable accessories of a spring morning and a walk in the meadows. Grand Amoure, who is here represented as the poet himself, comes in the course of his walk to two highways, one of which is the path of Contemplation, the other of Active Life. He chooses the latter way, and in it he meets Fame with her two milk-white greyhounds, Grace and Governance. She rides on a beautiful palfrey which is none other than Pegasus, and is encircled with tongues of fire. By her Grand Amoure is informed of a matchless lady named Bel Pucell, who lives in a tower upon an enchanted island, and who can be reached only after surmounting many difficulties. Following the suggestions of Fame, who presents him with her two greyhounds, our hero visits the castle of Doctrine, a fortress made of copper and built upon a craggy rock. Doctrine introduces him to her seven daughters—the seven sciences. These are Grammar, who delivers a learned oration; Logic, who dismisses him with a grave exhortation; Rhetoric, seated in a gorgeous chamber strewn with flowers and adorned with mirrors; Arithmetic, upon the walls of whose chamber the three fundamental rules are painted in gold; Music, in whose crystal tower the hero meets and is enamored with the lady of the enchanted island, the Bel Pucell;* Geometry, who also sits in a wondrous tower; and Astronomy, who dwells in a gorgeous pavilion in the midst of a flowery meadow. After many adventures with giants and dragons, each of which personates some human quality, the hero comes in sight at last of the stately palace of Bel Pucell, "walled with silver, and many a story upon

* "This means," says Prof. Morley, "that the youth who has advanced far enough in the pursuit of knowledge to have ears for the grand harmonies of life is for a time brought face to face with the bright ideal to be sought through years of forward battle."

the wall enameled royally." Into this palace he is received by Peace, Mercy, Justice, Reason, Grace, and Memory; and next morning he and Bel Pucell are married, according to the Catholic ritual, by *Lex Ecclesiæ*. Here one would have expected the allegory to end. But the poet goes on to relate the subsequent events in his hero's life, his death and burial. While Remembrance is writing his elegy, Fame again comes forward, promising that his name shall be enrolled with those of Joshua, Hector, Alexander, Cæsar, Arthur, Charlemagne, Godfrey of Bulloign, and other great heroes. Time and Eternity, crowned with triple diadems of gold, pronounce an exhortation, and the poem closes with an epilogue in which the author apologizes for having attempted to write such a fable. The allegory is easily interpreted; it is designed to point out the qualities which constitute the character of the true gentleman, and to illustrate the progress of his education and his achievements in life. It is a kind of a secular *Pilgrim's Progress*, in which the pilgrim is represented as a knight-errant seeking for the *summum bonum* of this life instead of that of the life which is to come.

In the last year of Queen Mary's reign, Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, projected a series of poems from English history in which all the illustrious but unfortunate characters who had lived since the time of the Conquest "were to pass in review before the poet, who descends, like Dante, into the infernal regions." This work was called *The Mirror for Magistrates*, "wherein may be seen by example of others with howe grevous plagues vices are punished, and how frayl and unstable worldly prosperity is found even of those whom Fortune seemeth most highly to favour." It was designed to be a continuation of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, a book which had been translated from Boccaccio's Latin work *De Casibus Principum*, but which had never attained to much popularity chiefly because it mentioned no English examples. Sackville, the projector of the work, wrote only two of the poems in the

Mirror,—The Induction, or general introduction, and The Complaint of the Duke of Buckingham.

The *Induction* is in the form of an allegory, and it is with it only that we have to speak in this chapter. It opens, not with a May morning and a stroll among birds and flowers, but with a winter's night when everything wears a dreary and deserted aspect:

Hawthorn had lost his motley livery,
The naked twigs were shivering all for cold;
And dropping down the tears abundantly,
Each thing, methought, with weeping eye me told
The cruel season, bidding me withhold
Myself within; for I was gotten out
Into the fields where as I walked about,
When lo, the night, with misty mantle spread,
Gan dark the day, and dim the azure skies.

As the poet walks, he is reminded of the uncertainties of life, and while he ponders, "a piteous wight," all dressed in black, appears before him. She tells him that her name is Sorrow, and that she dwells among the Furies where Pluto holds his throne and Lethe's deadly taste "doth reive remembrance of each thing forepast." Sorrow then conducts the poet to the infernal regions. In his description of his descent to the grisly lake, our author borrows largely from the imagery of Virgil and Dante; but his pictures of the allegorical characters which sat on the porch of hell are original, and are drawn with a master's hand. There he sees Remorse, and Dread, and Fell Revenge, Misery, Care, Sleep, the cousin of Death, Old Age, and Famine, and War, and Death himself. His description of Old Age will serve as an example:

Whoe'er had seen him sobbing how he stood
Unto himself, and how he would bemoan
His youth forepast,—as though it wrought him good
To talk of youth, all were his youth foregone,—
He would have mused and marveled much, whereon

This wretched Age should life desire so fain,
And knows full well life doth but length his pain :

Crook-back'd he was, tooth-shaken, and blear-eyed ;
Went on three feet, and, sometimes, crept on four ;
With old lame bones, that rattled by his side ;
His scalp all pil'd, and he with eld forelore,
His wither'd fist still knocking at death's door ;
Fumbling, and driveling, as he draws his breath ;
For brief, the shape and messenger of Death.

Passing by these shadowy inhabitants of the porch, the poet, with his guide, Sorrow, is ferried over the loathsome lake of Acheron, and comes to

The large great kyngdoms, and the dreadful reign
Of Pluto in his trone where he did dwell,
The wide waste places, and the hugie plaine :
The wailings, shrieks, and sundry sorts of paine,
The sighs, the sobs, the depe and deadly groan,
Earth, air and all resounding plaint and moan.

Thence did we passe the threefold emperie
To the utmost bounds where Rhadamanthus reigns,
Where proud folke waile their woful misery ;
Where dreadful din of thousands dragging chaines,
And baleful shrieks of ghosts in deadly paines
Tortured eternally are heard most brim
Through silent shades of night so dark and dim.

From hence upon our way we forward passe,
And through the groves and uncouth paths we go,
Which lead unto the Cyclop's walls of brasse :
And where that maine broad flood for aye doth flow,
Which parts the gladsome fields from place of woe :
Whence none shall ever pass to the Elizium plaine,
Or from Elizium ever turne againe.

Here a troop of men, most of them in arms, pass in order before the poet and Sorrow. These are they who have died

untimely deaths, and of whom it is yet uncertain whether they will be doomed to eternal night or rewarded with everlasting bliss.

Then first came Henry, Duke of Buckingham,
His cloak of black, all pil'd, and quite forlorne,
Wringing his hands, and Fortune oft doth blame,
Which of a duke hath made him now her skorne. . . .
And supping the tears that all his breast beraynde,
On cruel Fortune, weeping thus he playnde.*

Here ends the *Induction*, and the *Complaint of Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham*, begins. With reference to this remarkable allegory, Warton says: "The shadowy inhabitants of hell-gate are conceived with the vigor of a creative imagination, and described with great force of expression. They are delineated with that fullness of proportion, that invention of picturesque attributes, distinctness, animation, and amplitude of which Spenser is commonly supposed to have given the first specimens in our language, and which are characteristic of his poetry. We may venture to pronounce that Spenser at least caught his manner of designing allegorical personages from this model, which so greatly enlarged the former narrow bounds of our ideal imagery, as that it may be deemed an original in that style of painting."

We approach now the crowning masterpiece, the greatest allegory ever written—Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. This poem was published in 1590. It consists of six books, of which the first contains the Legend of the Knight of the Red Cross; the second, that of Sir Guyon; the third, of Britomartis; the fourth, of Cambel and Triamond; the fifth, of Artegal; and the sixth, of Sir Calidore. It was originally planned to consist of twelve books, but whether the remaining six books were ever written is unknown. There is a tradition which asserts that through the carelessness of a

* See Warton's *History of English Poetry*.

servant they were lost on the passage across the sea from Ireland to England. The versification is based upon the *ottava rima* made so popular in Italian poetry by Tasso and Ariosto. Instead of eight lines to a stanza, however, there are nine. The first eight lines are iambic pentameters, and the ninth a hexameter, the stanza thus closing with a lingering cadence which adds greatly to the melody of the verse. This species of versification is now known as the Spenserian stanza. Since the work consists of six poems, each containing a dozen long cantos, the student will understand the impossibility of giving in our brief space any complete analysis of the performance. We can only point out some of its beauties and indicate certain subjects in connection with it which may be found worthy of special study.

The plan of the first book is thus explained by the author in his dedicatory letter to Sir Walter Raleigh:

"The beginning of my history, if it were to be told by an historiographer, should be the twelfth book, which is the last, where I devise that the Faerie Queene kept her annual feast xii. days; upon which xii. severall days the occasions of the xii. severall adventures hapned, which being undertaken by xii. severall knights, are in these xii. bookes severally handled and discoursed. The first was this: In the beginning of the feast there presented himselfe a tall clownishe younge man, who, falling before the Queene of the Faeries desired a boone (as the manner then was) which during that feast she might not refuse; which was that hee might have the atchievement of any adventure which during that feaste should happen. That being granted, he rested himself on the floore, unfitte through his rusticity for a better place. Soone after entred a faire Ladye in mourning weedes, riding on a white asse, with a dwarf behind her leading a warlike steed that bore the arms of a knight, and his speare in the dwarf's hand. Shee, falling before the Queene of the Faeries, complayned that her father and mother, an ancient king and queene, had been by an

huge dragon many years shut up in a brasen Castle, who thence suffred them not to yssew: and therefore besought the Faerie Queene to assygne her some one of her knights to take on him that exployt. Presently that clownish person, upstarting, desired that adventure: whereat the Queene much wondering, and the Lady much gainesaying, yet he earnestly importuned his desire. In the end, the Lady told him that unlesse that armour which she brought would serve him (that is the armour of a Christian man specified by St. Paul, v. Ephes.) that he could not succeed in that enterprise: which being forthwith put upon him with dew furnitures thereunto, he seemed the goodliest man in all that company, and was well liked of the Lady. And eftsoones taking on him knighthood, and mounting on that strange courser, he went forth with her of that adventure: where beginneth the first Booke, viz.:

“A gentle Knight was pricking on the playne,” etc.

The adventures of the Knight of the Red Cross, or of Holiness, in destroying the foul dragon and liberating the lady's parents from the brazen tower wherein they were imprisoned, form the subject of the first book. In the first canto we are introduced to the knight riding forth on this adventure.

And ever, as he rode, his hart did earne
To prove his puissance in battell brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;
Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne.

A lovely Ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly asse more white than snow;
Yet she much whiter; but the same did hide
Under a vele, that wimpled was full low;
And over all a blacke stole shée did throw:
As one that inly mournd, so was she sad
And heavie sate upon her palfrey slow;
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had;
And by her in a line a milk-white lambe she lad.

So pure and innocent as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore ;
And by descent from royall lynage came
Of ancient kinges and queenes that had of yore
Their scepters stretcht from east to western shore,
And all the world in their subjection held ;
Till that infernal Feend with foule uprore
Forewasted all their land, and them expeld ;
Whom to avenge, she had this Knight from far compeld.*

Far behind her lagged a lazy dwarf, bearing her "bag of needments at his backe." As they rode thus across the plain, the sky became suddenly overcast and they were obliged to seek shelter in a forest where grew all kinds of trees. But this "wandring wood" proved to be none other than the grove surrounding Error's den, wherein lay a monster of hideous mien whom the knight attacked and slew. This was his first adventure, and many similar ones followed. They met with Archimago, an old man clad in long black garments, who persuaded them to rest for the night in his hermitage. By means of Archimago's magic arts and false representations, the knight was induced to leave the lady, who is called Una, and to journey forward alone. He afterwards met and defeated in combat a Saracen named Sansfoy, but took under his protection the "faire companion" of the infidel, a woman clothed in scarlet and named Duessa. As they journeyed onward together, the heat of the sun became so oppressive that they sought the shade of the trees to rest. Thinking to make a garland for the fair Duessa's head, the knight plucked a branch from the overhanging boughs, and strange to say, great drops of blood trickled from the tree, and

A piteous yelling voice was heard,
Crying, "O spare with guilty hands to teare
My tender sides in this rough rynd embard ;
But fly, ah ! fly far hence away, for feare

* *The Faerie Queene*, I., i., 3-5.

Least to you hap, that happened to me heare,
 And to this wretched Lady, my deare love;
 O too deare love, love bought with death too deare!"

It was the voice of Fradubio, who had been turned into a tree because he had hesitated, in doubt, between the fair Fræliissa and the witch Duessa. Both he and Fræliissa had been thus transformed and might not change their plight until they should be bathed in "a living well."

The false Duessa, now Fidessa hight,
 Heard how in vain Fradubio did lament
 And knew well all was true.* . . .

In the next canto we are carried back to fair Una, who, forsaken by the Red Cross Knight, wanders alone in the forest. One day

From her unhastie beast she did alight;
 And on the grasse her dainty limbs did lay
 In secret shadow, far from all mens sight:
 From her fayre head her fillet she undight,
 And layd her stole aside. Her angels face,
 As the great eye of heaven, shyned bright,
 And made a sunshine in the shady place;
 Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly grace.†

A lion, rushing suddenly out of the wood, "forgot his furious force," and

Kist her wearie feet,
 And lickt her lily hands with fawning tong;
 And he her wronged innocence did weat.
 Oh how can beautie maister the most strong,
 And simple truth subdue avenging wrong.‡

"The lion would not leave her desolate, but with her went along;" and wandering through wide deserts in search of the Red Cross Knight, they came at length to the dwelling of a blind old lady and her daughter, where they

* *Ibid.*, I., ii., 44.

† *Ibid.*, I., iii., 4.

‡ *Ibid.*, I., iii., 6.

lodged for the night. While they were sleeping, a robber named Kirkrapine came to the house bearing rich store of goods, which he had stolen from the churches to present to Abessa, the daughter of the blind woman. But neither she nor her mother dared open the door for fear of the lion; and when the robber, impatient of delay, forced his way into the room,

That disdainfull beast,
Encountring fierce, him sudden doth surprize;
And, seizing cruell clawes on trembling brest,
Under his lordly foot him proudly hath supprest.*

The next day Una was overtaken by Archimago disguised as the Red Cross Knight, and so well did he personate this character that not until he was defeated in combat with a Saracen named Sansloy did the lady discover the imposture. The faithful lion, too, fell under the stroke of the lawless infidel, and Una herself was borne away "upon his courser light; her prayers nought prevaile; his rage is more of might."

After his adventure with Fradubio, the Red Cross Knight was conducted by Duessa to the house of Pride, where he met another Saracen named Sansjoy, who recognized him as the slayer of his brother Sansfoy and challenged him to a fight. In the combat which followed, Sansjoy was defeated, but his life was saved by the false Duessa, who descended into hell to intercede for help. Although wounded in the fight, the Red Cross Knight escaped from the house of Pride and continued his journey accompanied by the dwarf. Being weary, he sat down by the roadside, and divesting himself of his armor, slaked his thirst at a fountain which had been a nymph of Diana, and, like him, had "satte downe to rest in middest of the race." The gentle knight, thoughtlessly drinking from this enchanted spring, grew faint and feeble, and lost his manly powers. Then a hideous giant, "horrible and hye,"

* *Ibid.*, I., iii., 19.

the son of Earth and blustering Eolus, rushed suddenly out of the wood and made him prisoner. But the woeful dwarf took up the armor which the knight had carelessly laid aside, and journeyed forward, seeking for help.

He had not travaild long, when on the way
 He wofull Lady, wofull Una, met
 Fast flying from that Paynims greedy pray,
 Whilst Satyrane him from pursuit did let:
 Who when her eyes she on the Dwarf had set,
 And saw the signes that deadly tydinges spake,
 She fell to ground for sorrowfull regret,
 And lively breath her sad brest did forsake;
 Yet might her pitteous heart be seen to pant and quake.*

The dwarf, having related to her the story of the knight's adventures and captivity, Una at once sought the assistance of Prince Arthur, who attacked the giant's castle, killed that monster, and set the prisoner free. After this, Una conducted her knight to the house of Holiness, where dwelt Cælia, with her three daughters, Fidelia, Speranza, and Charissa. There he was prepared and strengthened for the great contest with the dragon, and there he was introduced to the Seven Bead-men, who having

Vowed all

Their life to service of high heavens King,
 Did spend their daies in doing godly thing.†

Then he was led by a holy hermit to the top of a high mountain where appeared to him the vision of a goodly city,

Whose wals and towres were builded high and strong
 Of perle and precious stone, that earthly tong
 Cannot describe, nor wit of man can tell;
 Too high a ditty for my simple song!
 The Citty of the Greate King hight it well,
 Wherein eternall peace and happinesse doth dwell.‡

* *Ibid.*, I., vii., 20.

† *Ibid.*, I., x., 36.

‡ *Ibid.*, I., x., 55.

After this the knight meets the dragon, and at the close of a three days' combat overpowers and slays him, and sets free the noble captives so long detained in his castle. The first book closes with the betrothal of fair Una to the Red Cross Knight, and with the complete overthrow and discomfiture of the false Duessa.

This, in brief, is the plot of a small portion only of this great poem. Its allegorical interpretation, although seemingly intricate, is not at all difficult. Spenser, in his letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, says that the object of the book is to fashion a gentleman, or noble person, in virtuous and gentle discipline, and that, with this end in view, he has labored to portray in Arthur, before he was king, the image of a brave knight perfected in the twelve private moral virtues, "as Aristotle hath devised." . . . "In that *Faerie Queene* I meane *Glory* in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our sovaine, the *Queene*, and her kingdom in *Faerie Land*." The Red Cross Knight is the personification of Holiness clad in the armor of the Christian warrior as described by St. Paul: his loins are girt about with truth; his feet are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace; he has on the breast-plate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation; and he carries the shield of faith and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Thus armed, he goes forth to combat error wherever he may find it, and, above all, to win the grace of Gloriana. The lovely lady, fair Una, typifies Truth, and her milk-white lamb is Innocence. The dwarf, who lags so far behind her, represents the natural physical life so far inferior, and ever so far behind, our spiritual body. The trees, among which they take refuge from the storm, probably typify the different conditions of life, as youth, pleasure, sorrow, glory, maturity, old age, etc. While contemplating these different conditions, the knight wanders into Error's ways and becomes involved in a deadly contest with that monster. Archimago, whom next they meet, is the Great

Deceiver, and in him the poet probably meant to typify the Roman Catholic Church. His misrepresentation of Truth is the cause of a temporary alienation between Holiness and Truth, and of all the subsequent mishaps that occur to the knight. Sansfoy is, as his name indicates, the personification of Infidelity. Duessa, the two-faced deceiver, is the Catholic Church typified as a woman clothed in scarlet, this figure being suggested by a passage in the Apocalypse. Fradubio is the doubter who hesitates between the corrupt Romish Church and the purer, but by no means true, philosophy of the ancients, which is here represented by Frælissa. Neither Fradubio nor Frælissa can become useful, living members of the body social until they have been "bathed in a living well," in that living water of which Christ spoke to the woman of Samaria. The lion which espouses the cause of Truth and follows her so bravely is Reason. The blind woman and her daughter who at first refuse to listen to the words of Truth are Ignorance and Superstition. When the church-robber brings his stolen offerings to Superstition, she is prevented from receiving them because she has Truth and Reason with her. Reason is finally slain by Lawlessness, —Sansloy,—who also fights with and overcomes Archimago, whom he has mistaken for Holiness. Holiness is conducted by Duessa to the house of Pride, where he fights with Joylessness,—Sansjoy,—and, although victor in the end, is wounded by him. Joylessness would have ceased to exist had not the "diabolical faith," represented by Duessa, obtained from hell new lease of life for him. The fountain at which the knight drinks feebleness and faintness of heart signifies Weariness-in-well-doing. The giant who takes him captive is Worldly Pleasure. Then Arthur, the perfection of all virtues, comes to the rescue, slays the giant, wounds the many-headed beast upon which Duessa sits and which represents the ritual and traditions of Romanism, and liberates Holiness from the delusions and snares into which he has been led by Despair. Afterwards,

Truth brings the Red Cross Knight to the house of Holiness, where Faith, Hope, and Charity dwell with their heavenly mother, and there, through the aid of Faith, he is enabled to see the vision of the eternal city. Finally, having fought the good fight, and having obtained the victory over Sin, he becomes thenceforward the legal champion and defender of Truth, thereby meriting and receiving the gracious approval of Gloriana. Let the student now read the first book of this great poem, and with this interpretation before him see if he cannot discover new beauties hitherto unperceived.

There are many persons who turn away from the *Faerie Queene* because they do not like allegories, and they are repelled by the ever diverging and converging intricacy of the plot. But this need not be so. As Hazlitt says, "if they do not meddle with the allegory, the allegory will not meddle with them." Neither will the plot. Leaving out of mind all thought of the narrative, such readers may derive great pleasure from the sweetness of its music and the surpassing beauty of its pictures. Read the character of Una in Book I., Canto I. Compare the portraits of the characters in the Procession of the Passions (Canto IV.) with Sackville's pictures of the shadowy inhabitants of hell-gate, and then read the Masque of Cupid in Book II., Canto XII. Read the description of Duessa's descent into hell, in Book I., Canto V., and compare it with similar descriptions by Sackville, Dante, and Virgil, and with Pope's description of Orpheus's descent into Hades, in his *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*. Read the description of the Cave of Mammon, Book II., Canto VII.; that of the Gardens of Adonis, Book III., Canto VI.; that of the Bower of Bliss, Book II., Canto XII.; the story of Florimel and the Witch's son, Book III., Canto VII.; and the vision of Colin Clout, Book VI., Canto X. The more one reads of such passages, the more is he enchanted with the delicious melody of the verse and with the wonderful word-pictures which everywhere attract and charm the fancy. One does not have

to read this great poem as an allegory in order to appreciate its beauties, but it is perhaps better to read it by piecemeal and in detached fragments. "If you love poetry well enough to enjoy it for its own sake," says Leigh Hunt, "let no evil reports of his *allegory* deter you from an acquaintance with Spenser, for great will be your loss. His allegory itself is but one part allegory and nine parts beauty and enjoyment; sometimes an excess of flesh and blood. . . . His wholesale poetical belief, mixing up all creeds and mythologies, but with less violence, resembles that of Dante and Boccaccio. . . . His versification is almost perpetual honey. He is not so great a poet as Shakspeare or Dante; he has less imagination though more fancy than Milton. . . . He has had more idolatry and imitation from his brethren than all the rest put together. The old undramatic poets, Drayton, Browne, Drummond, Giles, and Phineas Fletcher, were as full of him as the dramatic were of Shakspeare. Milton studied and used him, calling him 'sage and serious Spenser;' and adding that he 'dared be known to think him a better teacher than Scotus and Aquinas.' Cowley said he became a poet by reading him. Dryden claimed him for a master. Pope said he read him with as much pleasure when he was old as when he was young. Collins and Gray loved him; Thomson, Shenstone, and a host of inferior writers expressly imitated him; Burns, Byron, Shelley, and Keats made use of his stanza; Coleridge eulogized him."

Hazlitt says: "Of all the poets, Spenser is the most poetical. Though much later than Chaucer, his obligations to preceding writers were less. He has in some measure borrowed the plan of his poem from Ariosto, but he has engrafted upon it an exuberance of fancy and an endless voluptuousness of sentiment which are not to be found in the Italian writer. Farther, Spenser is even more of an inventor in the subject-matter. There is an originality, richness, and variety in his allegorical personages and fictions which almost vies with the splendor of the

ancient mythology. If Ariosto transports us into the regions of romance, Spenser's poetry is all fairy-land. In Ariosto we walk upon the ground in company, gay, fantastic, and adventurous enough. In Spenser we wander in another world, among ideal beings. The poet takes and lays us in the lap of a lovelier nature, by the sound of softer streams, among greener hills and fairer valleys. He paints nature, not as we find it, but as we expected to find it, and fulfills the delightful promise of our youth."

Taine says: "No modern is more like Homer. Like Homer, he is always simple and clear; he makes no leaps, he omits no argument, he robs no word of its primitive and ordinary meaning, he preserves the natural sequence of ideas. Like Homer again, he is redundant, ingenuous, even childish. He says everything, he puts down reflections which we have made beforehand; he repeats without limit his grand ornamental epithets. We can see that he beholds objects in a beautiful uniform light, with infinite detail; that he wishes to show all this detail, never fearing to see his happy dream change or disappear; that he traces its outline with a regular movement, never hurrying or slackening. He is even a little prolix, too unmindful of the public, too ready to lose himself and dream about the things he beholds. His thought expands in vast, repeated comparisons, like those of the old Ionic bard."

Next to the *Faerie Queene*, the greatest allegory in our language is Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, published in 1678. It has neither rhyme nor metre, but in tone, imagery, and sentiment it is in the highest degree poetical. Hence we shall treat of it here as one of the few great prose-poems of which our literature can boast. It is remarkable as being the work of an uneducated man, persecuted and imprisoned, and with no literary models save the Bible and the *Book of Martyrs*; a man of strange impulses, of limited ideas, and troubled with a variety of images and unreasoning emotions. John Bunyan, for no other crime than that of preaching the gospel as he understood it, had

been imprisoned for twelve years in Bedford jail. While there, he partially supported himself and his family by making lace tags and wire-netting. "I found myself encompassed with infirmities," he said. "The parting with my wife and poor children had often been to me in this place as the pulling of the flesh from the bones, and that not only because I am somewhat too fond of these great mercies, but also because I should have often brought to my mind the many hardships, miseries, and wants that my poor family was like to meet with should I be taken from them, especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all besides." It was here, and under these distressing circumstances, that he thought out and planned the work which was to make his name a household word wherever the English language is spoken. At first he had no thought of writing a book. The successive stages of a Christian's spiritual progress was a thought which had been accidentally suggested to him. But ideas came flocking into his mind and arranging themselves around this central thought until, finally, he began to clothe them in language. And in his leisure moments, snatched from his devotions and from his lace-tag-making, he wrote them down. In the City of Destruction there lived a sinful man named Christian. This man, hearing a voice from heaven proclaiming vengeance against the city, determines to leave all and flee for his life. He is helped on his way by Evangelist, who tells him what road to follow, and he is hindered by Worldlywise, who seeks to turn him aside. He perseveres, and passing bravely through the Slough of Despond, he reaches the Strait Gate, where a wise Interpreter instructs him further in regard to the way. Coming then to the foot of the Cross, his burden of sins drops from his back, and he goes on rejoicing. He climbs the steep hill of Difficulty and visits the great castle where dwell Watchful and his two daughters, Piety and Prudence. Further on he is opposed by a mighty demon named Apollyon, whom he finally overcomes. Then with trem-

bling footsteps he passes through the dark Valley of the Shadow of Death, and, after many adventures, comes into Vanity Fair, where he is beaten and thrown into prison, and his companion, Faithful, is burned at the stake. Escaping from this place, he falls into the hands of Giant Despair, who beats him unmercifully and throws him into a dark dungeon. But he is delivered from this horrid place and goes forward stronger and more trustful and more determined than before. At last, after passing over the Delectable Mountains, whence he saw a glorious vision of the holy city, he reaches the dark, deep river of Death, and, crossing it, he arrives at the end and goal of his pilgrimage.

The style of this poem is peculiar. You may read page after page and find but few words of more than two syllables. The language is plain and homely, but it is neither "a well of English undefiled," nor is it the every-day speech of the common people. It is rather the language we would expect from a religious enthusiast, simple-hearted, uneducated, and yet gifted with deep feeling and a vivid imagination. It is the lowest style of English freed from inaccuracies of grammar, and embellished by large additions from the vocabulary and the favorite expressions of the Bible and of the church. Its charm is in its homelike, pious simplicity. If you attempt to modify the language, you destroy the poem.

The student will find many beautiful and striking passages. Among them we will mention the Visit to the Interpreter's House, the description of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the Cave of Giants Pope and Pagan, the Arrival at the Delectable Mountains, the description of the Celestial City. We quote a short selection from the last:

Now as they walked in this land, they had more rejoicing than in parts more remote from the Kingdom to which they were bound; and drawing near to the City, they had yet a more perfect view thereof. It was builded of Pearls and Precious Stones, also the street thereof was paved with gold; so that by reason of the natural

glory of the City, and the reflection of the sunbeams upon it, Christian with desire fell sick; Hopeful also had a fit or two of the same disease. Wherefore here they lay by it awhile, crying out because of their pangs, "If you see my beloved, tell him that I am sick of love!" . . . They therefore went up here with much agility and speed, though the foundation upon which the City was framed was higher than the clouds. They therefore went up through the regions of the air, sweetly talking as they went, being comforted because they had safely got over the River and had such glorious Companions to attend them. . . . "You are going now," said the Shining Ones, "to the Paradise of God, wherein you shall see the Tree of Life and eat of the never-fading fruit thereof; and when you come there, you shall have white robes given you, and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King, even all the days of Eternity."

The second part of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, relating the journey of Christian's wife and children to the Celestial City, was published in 1684. It is far inferior to the first, both in interest and in poetical imagery.

Lord Macaulay, writing of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, says: "It is the only work of its kind which possesses a strong human interest. Other allegories only amuse the fancy. The allegory of Bunyan has been read by many thousands with tears. While it obtains admiration from the most fastidious critics, it is loved by those who are too simple to admire it."

Mr. Shaw says: "No religious writer has analyzed more minutely and represented more faithfully every phase of feeling through which the soul passes in its struggles with sin: the clearness of these pictures is rather increased than diminished by the allegorical dress in which they are clothed. In them Bunyan did but draw upon his own memory and narrate his own experiences."

M. Taine says: "These allegories are hallucinations as clear, complete, and sound as ordinary perceptions. No one but Spenser is so lucid. Imaginary objects rise of themselves before the author. He has no trouble in calling them up or forming them. . . . He distinguishes

and arranges all the parts of the landscape. . . . Dialogues flow from his pen as in a dream. He does not seem to be thinking. Events and speeches seem to grow and dispose of themselves within him, independent of his will. Nothing, as a rule, is colder than the characters in an allegory; his are living. . . . He has the copiousness, the tone, the ease of Homer; he is as close to Homer as an Anabaptist tinker could be to an heroic singer, a creator of gods."

An allegorical poem of a character very different from any of the preceding is *The Purple Island; or, the Isle of Man*, written by Phineas Fletcher, and published in 1633.

An isle I fain would sing, an island fair;
A place too seldom view'd, yet still in view;
Near as ourselves, yet farthest from our care;
Which we by leaving find, by seeking lost;
A foreign home, a strange, though native coast;
Most obvious to all, yet most unknown to most.

This "isle" is the body of man; and the poem is an allegorical and yet minute and elaborate description of the physical and intellectual nature of man. The work includes twelve cantos, each of which is represented as being sung by a shepherd to the neighboring shepherds and shepherdesses,—it being begun in the morning "and finished by folding-time in the evening." The first five cantos refer to the human body. The muscles, bones, arteries, and veins are pictured as hills, dales, streams, and rivers, and their various appearances and meanderings are described with great minuteness. The poet then proceeds in the remaining cantos to speak of the complex operations of the human mind. The king of the *Isle of Man* is Intellect, and he is furnished with eight counsellors—the five senses, Common Sense, Fancy, and Memory. The Vices attack the Human Fortress, and a fierce contest ensues for the possession of the human soul. At length an angel (none other than King James I.) appears upon the scene and promises victory to the Virtues.

Hallam says of this poem: "From its nature it is i
superably wearisome; yet the language is often ve
poetical, the versification harmonious, the invention ferti
But that perpetual monotony of allegorical persons whi
sometimes displeases us even in Spenser, is seldom reliev
in Fletcher; the understanding revolts at the confus
crowd of inconceivable beings in a philosophical poe
and the justness of analogy which had given us sor
pleasure in the anatomical cantos, is lost in tedious c
scriptions of all possible moral qualities which can nev
co-exist in the Purple Island of one individual."

And George MacDonald says: "The poem is full
poetry. It is a whole; its members are well-fitted; it is fi
of beauties—in parts they swarm like fire-flies. It is li
a well-shaped house, built of mud, and stuck full of precio
stones."

As an example merely of the versification and the sty
of description in this poem, we copy the following stanza
referring to Parthenia, or Chastity:

A bed of lilies flow'r upon her cheek,
And in the midst was set a circling rose;
Whose sweet aspect would force Narcissus seek
New liveries, and fresher colors choose
To deck his beauteous head in snowy 'tire;
But all in vain: for who can hope t' aspire
To such a fair, which none attain, but all admire!

Her ruby lips lock up from gazing sight
A troop of pearls, which march in goodly row:
But when she deigns those precious bones undight,
Soon heavenly notes from those divisions flow,
And with rare music charm the ravish'd ears,
Daunting bold thoughts, but cheering modest fears:
The spheres so only sing, so only charm the spheres.

Yet all these stars which deck this beauteous sky
By force of th' inward sun both shine and move;
Thron'd in her heart sits love's high majesty;
In highest majesty, the highest love.

As when a taper shines in glassy frame,
The sparkling crystal burns in glittering flame,
So does that brightest love brighten this lovely dame.

In the year 1506, Alexander Barclay, the author of the *Shyp of Fooles*, elsewhere mentioned, translated from the French an allegory called *The Castel of Laboure*, "wherein is riches, virtue, and honour." This piece was of considerable length but of small merit, and represented Lady Reason conquering Despair, Poverty, and the kindred evils which beset a man newly married. About the year 1536 another French allegory of similar character and bearing the same name was translated into English by Bishop Alcock. These poems, if poems they may be called, probably supplied James Thomson with some remote suggestions of an allegory which he finally published in 1748 under the name of *The Castle of Indolence*. "This poem," says Thomson, "being writ in the manner of Spenser, the obsolete words, and a simplicity of diction in some lines which borders on the ludicrous, were necessary to make the imitation more perfect." The poem originated in a few disconnected stanzas intended by the author to ridicule his own indolence and that of a few friends. But, borrowing ideas from the French works mentioned above, from Tasso, from Spenser, and from an obscure poem on *Indolence* written by a certain Joseph Mitchell, and to these adding his own no small stock of imagination and fancy, he was able to construct, after fifteen years' labor, an allegory which is truly delightful. The *Castle of Indolence* is contained in two cantos. The first canto describes

The castle hight of Indolence,
And its false luxury ;
Where for a little time, alas !
We lived right jollily.

Of this canto George Saintsbury says: "It is not only Thomson's best work, but it is one of the very best things

of its kind to be found either in English or in any other literature. For it possesses a coherent plan and scheme which are fully and successfully carried out. It is quite complete in itself, and needs no sequel as a work of art. Nor does it need any internal addition. The picture of the castle and its demesne, with the portraits of the chief sojourners, are quite sufficient for the canvas, and few persons will find any fault with the manner in which they are put upon it."

The opening stanzas, describing the castle, are among the finest portions of this canto:

In lowly dale, fast by a river's side,
 With woody hill o'er hill encompass'd round,
 A most enchanting wizard did abide,
 Than whom a fiend more fell is nowhere found,
 It was, I ween, a lovely spot of ground;
 And there a season atween June and May,
 Half pranked with Spring, with Summer half imbrown'd,
 A listless climate made, where, sooth to say,
 No living wight could work, ne caréd even for play.

Was nought around but images of rest:
 Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between;
 And flowery beds that slumbrous influence kest,
 From poppies breathed; and beds of pleasant green,
 Where never yet was creeping creature seen.
 Meantime unnumber'd glittering streamlets play'd,
 And hurl'd everywhere their waters sheen;
 That, as they bickered through the sunny glade,
 Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur made.

Join'd to the prattle of the purling rills,
 Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,
 And flocks loud bleating from the distant hills,
 And vacant shepherds piping in the dale:
 And, now and then, sweet Philomel would wail,
 Or stockdoves 'plain amid the forest deep,
 That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale;
 And still a coil the grasshopper did keep;
 Yet all these sounds yblent inclinéd all to sleep.

Full in the passage of the vale above,
 A sable, silent, solemn forest stood,
 Where nought but shadowy forms was seen to move,
 As Idless fancied in her dreaming mood :
 And up the hills, on either side, a wood
 Of blackening pines, aye waving to and fro,
 Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood ;
 And where this valley winded out below,
 The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely heard, to flow,

 A pleasant land of drowsyhead it was,
 Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye ;
 And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
 Forever flushing round a summer sky :
 There eke the soft delights that witchingly
 Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast ;
 And the calm pleasures always hover'd nigh ;
 But whate'er smacked of noyance or unrest,
 Was far, far off expelled from this delicious nest.

The second canto is decidedly inferior to the first. It relates to

The Knight of Arts and Industry,
 And his achievements fair ;
 That, by this castle's overthrow,
 Secured and crownéd were.

It does not admit of such a pleasing variety of imagery, and the matter which it contains is of a more conventional and less poetic character. And yet its merits are of no mean order.

The student should not omit a careful study of at least the first half of this poem. He will be delighted with the speech of Indolence, and with the description of the dream-fancies of the inmates of the castle. He will also be interested in comparing Thomson's happiest efforts at versification with those of his great model, Spenser. "To the *Castle of Indolence*," says Campbell, "Thomson brought not only the full nature but the perfect art of a poet. . . .

Every stanza of that charming allegory, at least of the whole of the first part of it, gives out a group of images from which the mind is reluctant to part, and a flow of harmony which the ear wishes to hear repeated."

The taste for long allegories, once so popular, is now no longer in existence. Several short allegorical poems of great merit have been written during the present century, but they differ in style and character so widely from those which we have just mentioned as almost to deserve a separate classification. We shall notice only a few among the best of these productions.

The Vision of Sin is an allegorical poem written by Alfred Tennyson in 1842. The character of the allegory is sufficiently indicated by the title.

I had a vision when the night was late :
 A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
 He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,
 But that his heavy rider kept him down.
 And from the palace came a child of sin,
 And took him by the curls and led him in,
 Where sat a company with heated eyes,
 Expecting when a fountain should arise :
 A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
 As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
 Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—
 Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes.

* * * * *

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,
 That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :
 I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
 Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
 God made himself an awful rose of dawn,
 Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,
 From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near
 A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
 Came floating on for many a month and year,
 Unheeded : and I thought I would have spoken,

And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late :
 But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken
 When that cold vapor touch'd the palace gate,
 And link'd again. I saw within my head
 A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death,
 Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
 And lighted at a ruin'd inn.

The part of the poem which follows consists of a monologue on the sins and shams of the world, spoken by this "gray and gap-tooth'd man." The following stanzas will illustrate its style and manner :

Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
 While we keep a little breath !
 Drink to heavy Ignorance !
 Hob-and-nob with brother Death !

Fill the cup and fill the can !
 Mingle madness, mingle scorn !
 Dregs of life and lees of man :
 Yet we will not die forlorn.

Every one is familiar with Leigh Hunt's little allegory of *About Ben Adhem*, and it is altogether unnecessary for us to transcribe any portion of it here. It is "full of picturesque yet delicate beauty of thought and language," and its interpretation is apparent to the most careless reader. *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, by James Russell Lowell, conveys a similar moral,—that of love for our fellow-man,—but it is much longer, and is replete with picturesque descriptions and romantic imagery. We have elsewhere, in the chapter on Poetical Romances, spoken of the allegorical signification which may be attached to Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. The student of allegory would do well to re-read those poems, keeping the interpretation of them in his mind, and applying it whenever possible. Of the remaining short poetical allegories, there are two which should by no means be unnoticed. They are Mrs. Southey's

Mariner's Hymn, and Longfellow's *Building of the Ship*. A few prose allegories, among which are Addison's *Vision of Mirza*, and Johnson's *Hill of Science*, and *The Journey of a Day*, are so poetical in thought and conception that they may be studied with profit in this connection.

FABLES: Of the fables in our language we need speak but very briefly. The student has but to remember what we have said concerning some of our earliest allegories to understand the close relationship which exists between the fable and the ordinary allegory. Chaucer's *Parlament of Foules*, his *Nun's Priest's Tale*, and other similar stories, might with propriety be called fables. The best-known collection of fables in the language is that made by John Gay, about 1720. These are written in easy octo-syllabic verse, in a style easily understood and readily appreciated by young people. There is but little to recommend them, however, in the way of picturesqueness or genuine wit, and they fall far below the matchless performances of Æsop and La Fontaine. Hazlitt says: "They are certainly a work of great merit, both as to the quantity of invention implied and as to the elegance and facility of the execution." The following is an example:

THE TURKEY AND THE ANT.

In other men we faults can spy,
And blame the mote that dims their eye,
Each little speck and blemish find;
To our own stronger errors blind.

A Turkey tired of common food,
Forsook the barn and sought the wood,
Behind her ran an infant train,
Collecting here and there a grain.

"Draw near, my birds!" the mother cries,
"This hill delicious fare supplies;
Behold the busy negro race,
See millions blacken all the place!
Fear not! like me with freedom eat;
An Ant is most delightful meat.

How bless'd, how envied were our life,
 Could we but 'scape the poulterer's knife;
 But man, curs'd man, on Turkeys preys,
 And Christmas shortens all our days.
 Sometimes with oysters we combine,
 Sometimes assist the savory chine;
 From the low peasant to the lord,
 The Turkey smokes on every board.
 Sure men for gluttony are cursed
 Of the seven deadly sins the worst.'

An Ant who climb'd beyond his reach,
 Thus answer'd from the neighboring beech:

"Ere you remark another's sin,
 Bid thy own conscience look within;
 Control thy more voracious bill,
 Nor for a breakfast nations kill."

Single short fables may be found in great numbers throughout our literature. Spenser, in *The Shepherd's Calendar*, introduces the two fables of *The Briar and the Oak* and *The Fox and the Kid*. Dryden, in *The Hind and the Panther*, relates the fables of *The Swallows and the Martin* and *The Pigeons and the Buzzard*. Such fables have always been used as a convenient and simple means of illustration, and will never lose their popularity.

Burns's poem, *The Two Dogs*, may be included among the fables of our literature. In it two dogs are represented as discussing the relative amount of happiness enjoyed by the rich and the poor, leading us to conclude that, after all, there is not very much real difference. *The Brigs of Ayr* is a similar performance, being a conversation between the old bridge and the new, wherein an ingenious comparison is drawn between the architecture and manners of olden times and those of the present. Both poems are admirable examples of their author's rare ability in combining humorous and picturesque descriptions with sober reflections and moralizing sentiments.

We shall close the present chapter with the following *charming* little fable from Leigh Hunt:

THE FISH, THE MAN, AND THE SPIRIT.

To Fish.

You strange, astonished-looking, angle-faced,
 Dreary-mouthed, gaping wretches of the sea,
 Gulping salt-water everlastingly,
 Cold-blooded, though with red your blood be graced,
 And mute, though dwellers in the roaring waste;
 And you, all shapes beside, that fishy be,—
 Some round, some flat, some long, all devilry,
 Legless, unloving, infamously chaste:—
 O scaly, slippery, wet, swift, staring wights,
 What is't ye do? what life lead? eh, dull goggles?
 How do ye vary your vile days and nights?
 How pass your Sundays? Are ye still but joggles
 In ceaseless wash? Still nought but gapes, and bites,
 And drinks, and stares, diversified with boggles?

A Fish Answers.

Amazing monster! that, for aught I know,
 With the first sight of thee didst make our race
 Forever stare! O flat and shocking face,
 Grimly divided from the breast below!
 Thou that on dry land horribly dost go
 With a split body and most ridiculous pace,
 Prong after prong, disgracer of all grace,
 Long-useless-finned, haired, upright, unwet, slow!

O breather of unbreathable, sword-sharp air,
 How canst exist? How bear thyself, thou dry
 And dreary sloth! What particle canst share
 Of the only blessed life, the watery?
 I sometimes see of ye an actual *pair*
 Go by! linked fin by fin! most odiously.

*The Fish turns into a Man, and then into a Spirit, and again
 Speaks.*

Indulge thy smiling scorn, if smiling still,
 O man! and loathe, but with a sort of love:
 For difference must its use by difference prove,

And, in sweet clang, the spheres with music fill.
 One of the spirits am I, that at his will
 Live in whate'er has life—fish, eagle, dove—
 No hate, no pride, beneath nought, nor above,
 A visitor of the rounds of God's sweet skill.

Man's life is warm, glad, sad, 'twixt loves and graves,
 Boundless in hope, honored with pangs austere,
 Heaven-gazing; and his angel-wings he craves:
 The fish is swift, small-needing, vague yet clear,
 A cold, sweet, silver life, wrapp'd in round waves,
 Quickened with touches of transporting fear.

REFERENCES.

HISTORICAL STUDIES.

STUDY the history of England from the close of the fourteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth century, with special reference to the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

LITERARY STUDIES.

CHAUCER: See list of references at the end of the fourth chapter. Study Lounsbury's edition of *The Parliament of Foules*. A good edition of Chaucer's complete works is that by Thomas Tyrwhitt (1775), republished in London (1874). See, also, *The Life of Chaucer*, by William Godwin, London (1803); *Illustrations of Chaucer*, by Rev. John Todd (1810); *Tales from Chaucer in Prose*, by Matthew Brown; Coleridge's *Table Talk*.

SPENSER: Hazlitt's *English Poets*; Morley's *Library of English Literature*; Craik's *Spenser and his Poetry*; *Life of Spenser*, by Rev. John Todd; Lowell's *Among My Books*; Taine's *English Literature*. A good edition of Spenser's complete works is that by Rev. Henry John Todd (1805), republished in London (1872). A good American edition was edited by George S. Hillard (1839).

DUNBAR: See Warton's *History of English Poetry*; Morley's *First Sketch of English Literature*. His works, edited by Laing, were published in 1824.

BUNYAN: Study the rise and progress of Puritanism in England. Read Macaulay's *Essay on Bunyan*; George Offor's edition of the *Pilgrim's Progress* (1856); Cheever's *Lectures on Bunyan*; Taine's *English Literature*.

THOMSON: One of the best editions of his works is that by Robert Bell (1855).

GAY: See the *Biographia Britannica* and Thackeray's *English Humorists*.

CHAPTER VI.

HISTORICAL POETRY.

Definition—Early Rhyming Chronicles—The Mirror for Magistrates—Michael Drayton—Polyolbion—Other Works of Drayton—Samuel Daniel—The Civil Wars—Mirabilis Annus—Annus Mirabilis of Dryden—Addison's Campaign—Scott's Field of Waterloo—The Columbiad, by Joel Barlow—Miscellaneous Poems.

AN historical poem is a metrical narrative usually written to commemorate some important public event. Properly speaking, it is not poetry, for although it may be constructed strictly according to the rules of versification, it lacks those elements which appeal to the fancy and the imagination, and without which no real poetry can exist. Whether the poetical romance suggested the historical poem, or the historical poem the poetical romance, it is impossible to say, as both appeared at about the same period in our literature, and the earliest specimens of both possess so many characteristics in common that it is sometimes difficult to determine to which class a poem properly belongs. This is especially true of the early rhyming chronicles, of which we have spoken in a preceding chapter. The chronicles of Layamon and of Robert Manning of Brunne, although professing to be metrical histories, contain so large an element of the purely fabulous and imaginative, that they are more properly romances. Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle* contains more trustworthy information regarding the physical features and the social condition of England in the thirteenth century, and yet it does not rise to the dignity or truthfulness of history. Neither can we say much more for the historical accuracy of the histories, or "tragedies," as they were called, which compose the *Mirror for Magistrates*, published in 1559. The

allegorical *Induction* written for this work by Thomas Sackville (and of which we have given an account in the chapter on allegories), and *The Complaint of Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham*, by the same author, are incomparably the best poems in the collection. The work having been abandoned by its original projector, was completed under the auspices of William Baldwin and George Ferrers. They, "deterred, perhaps, by the greatness of the attempt," did not follow out the design of Sackville—that of having all the illustrious characters of English history from the Conquest to the end of the fourteenth century pass in review before the poet; but they modified it by choosing lives and subjects from the chronicles of Fabyan and Hall, thus beginning instead of closing with the end of the fourteenth century. In this undertaking they were assisted by other writers, as Cavyll, Chaloner, Dolman, Seager, Phaer, Churchyard, and Skelton. Their design was to produce merely an English sequel to Boccaccio's *De Casibus Principum* as versified by Lydgate in his *Fall of Princes*. The work contained at first nineteen "tragedies," but in the second edition eight more were added. The most important, besides the parts contributed by Sackville, were the histories of *King Richard II.*, by Ferrers; of *Jack Cade* and of *James I., of Scotland*, by Baldwin; of *Owen Glendower*, by Phaer; of *Edward IV.*, by Skelton; and of *Jane Shore*, by Churchyard.

In 1587 a new edition of the *Mirror for Magistrates* appeared, with large additions of lives antecedent to those contained in the original *Mirror*. These were written principally by John Higgins, a schoolmaster of Ilminster, in Somersetshire; and the earliest was the story of Albanact, the youngest son of Brutus and the first king of Scotland. There were also in this edition a life of *Cardinal Wolsey*, by Churchyard; the legend of *King James the Fourth* and of *Flodden Field*, written fifty years earlier, by one Francis Dingley; besides several other sketches by various authors. The *Mirror for Magistrates* was now a

very voluminous work, embracing a series of legends, histories, and tragedies from the time of Brutus to the reign of Henry VIII. The portion added by Higgins and his associates was called the First Part, while the work of Sackville, Ferrers, and Baldwin was called the Second Part. The most remarkable passage in Higgins's histories is to be found in his legend of Cordelia, the youngest daughter of King Lear, where he represents her as being tempted by Despair and encouraged to commit suicide:

I am thy friend Despair.
Now if thou art to dye no whit afrayde
Here shalt thou choose of instruments, behold,
Shall rid thy restless life——*

And Despair exhibits a thousand instruments of death, knives, swords, and poniards, "all bedyde with bloode and poysons."

We are reminded of the temptation of the Red Cross Knight by Despair in the *Faerie Queene*:

Then gan the villain him to overawe,
And brought unto him, swords, ropes, poysons, fire,
And all that might him to perdition draw;
And bade him choose what death he would desire:
For death was due to him who had provokt God's ire.†

Or of the treatment of Christian and Hopeful at the hands of Giant Despair in the *Pilgrim's Progress*:

So when morning was come, he goes to them in a surly manner, as before, and perceiving them to be very sore with the stripes that he had given them the day before, he told them, that since they were never like to come out of that place, their only way would be forthwith to make an end of themselves, either with knife, halter, or poison: For why, said he, should you choose life, seeing it is attended with such bitterness?‡

* *Mirror for Magistrates*. Fol. 36, b.

† *Faerie Queene*, I., x., 50.

‡ *Pilgrim's Progress*. Edited by Scott, p. 162.

In 1610, Richard Niccols, a poet of some celebrity, issued another edition of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, "newly enlarged, with a last part called a *Winter Night's Vision*, being an addition of such Tragedies especially famous as are exempted in the former Historie, with a poem annexed called *England's Eliza*." The only part of this last addition worth noticing is the *Legend of Richard III.*, in which the author copies quite largely from Shakspeare's tragedy. Compare the two following passages:

Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
Came to my tent, and every one did threat
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard.

SHAKSPEARE: *Richard III.*, v. iii.

I thought that all those murdered ghosts, whom I
By death had sent to their untimely grave,
With baleful noise about my tent did cry,
And of the heavens with sad complaint did crave,
That they on guilty wretch might vengeance have.

NICCOLS: *Legend*, p. 764.

The *Mirror for Magistrates*, as it appeared in its completed form, was a poem—if such we may call it—of wonderful dimensions. But, as Lowell remarks, "this was the period of the saurians in English poetry, interminable poems, book after book, and canto after canto, like far-stretching *vertebræ*, that at first sight would seem to have rendered earth unfit for the habitation of man. They, most of them, sleep well now, as they once made their readers sleep, and their huge remains lie embedded in the deep morasses of Chambers and Anderson."

Prominent among these "saurians" is Warner's *Albion's England*, a poem in thirteen books of fourteen-syllabled rhyming verse, published in 1586–1606. It claims to be "a history of the same kingdome, from the originals of the first inhabitants thereof,"—about the time of the deluge,—"unto the raigne of Queen Elizabeth." Meres, in

his *Wit's Treasury*, says that "by this poem the English tongue was mightily enriched and gorgeously invested in rare ornaments and resplendent habiliments." But it is to be doubted whether as a history it is very trustworthy, or as a poem whether it would stand the tests of modern criticism.

Of quite superior merit to Warner's performance is Drayton's *Polyolbion*; but this work, which was completed in 1622, is rather geographical and descriptive than historical. It consists of thirty books, containing in all nearly sixteen thousand hexameter verses. It is a metrical description—legendary, historical, and topographical—of England and Wales, county by county, village by village. The original work was enriched by maps and by antiquarian notes from the pen of John Selden; and the information which it gave was considered so accurate that scientific men have not hesitated to refer to it as an authority. Hallam says: "There is probably no poem of this kind in any other language, comparable in extent and excellence to the *Polyolbion*; nor can any one read a portion of it without admiration for its learned and highly gifted author. Yet, perhaps, no English poem, known as well by name, is so little known beyond its name." The following, selected from his description of the county of Warwick, will serve as a specimen of the versification:

My native country, then, which so brave spirits hast bred,
If there be virtues yet remaining in thy earth,
Or any good of thine thou bredst into my birth,
Accept it as thine own, whilst now I sing for thee,
Of all the later brood the unworthiest though I be.

George Saintsbury, writing of this poem, says: "The 'strange herculean task,' to borrow its author's description of it, has been very happily performed. It may safely be assumed that very few living Englishmen have read it through. But those who have will probably agree that there is a surprising interest in it, and that this interest is

kept up by a very artful admixture of styles and subjects. Legends, fancy pieces, such as that of *The Marriage of Thame and Isis*, with its unmatched floral description, accounts of rural sports and the like, ingeniously diversify the merely topographical narrative. . . . The variety of Drayton's performance is almost as remarkable as its bulk. He was master, also, of a very strong, and, at the same time, musical decasyllabic line."

As an example of his happiest style, we copy the "unmatched floral description" referred to above:

The Naiads and the Nymphs extremely overjoyed,
And on the winding banks all busily employed,
Upon this joyful day, some dainty chaplets twine:
Some others chosen out, with fingers neat and fine,
Brave anadems do make: some baldrics up do bind:
Some garlands: and to some the nosegays were assigned
As best their skill did serve. But for that Thame should be
Still man-like as himself, therefore they will that he
Should not be drest with flowers to garden that belong-
(His bride that better fit), but only such as sprung
From the replenished meads and fruitful pastures near.
To sort which flowers, some sit, some making garlands were;
The primrose placing first, because that in the spring
It is the first appears, then only flourishing;
The azured harebell next with them they neatly mixed,
T' allay whose luscious smell they woodbind plac'd betwixt.
Amongst those things of scent, there prick they in the lily:
And near to that again her sister daffodilly.
To sort these flowers of show, with th' other that were sweet,
The cowslip then they couch, and the oxlip from her meet:
The columbine amongst they sparingly do set,
The yellow kingcup wrought in many a curious fret,
And now and then among, of eglantine a spray,
By which again a course of lady-smocks they lay:
The crow-flower, and thereby the clover flower they stick,
The daisy, over all those sundry sweets so thick,
As Nature doth herself to imitate her right:
Who seems in that her pearl so greatly to delight,

That every plain therewith she powd'reth to behold :
 The crimson danel flowers, the blue-bottle and gold,
 Which though esteemed but weeds, yet for their dainty hues,
 And for their scent not ill, they for this purpose choose.
 Thus having told you how the bridegroom Thame was drest,
 I'll show you how the bride fair Isis was invest ;
 Sitting to be attired under her bower of state,
 Which scorns a meaner sort than fits a princely rate,
 In anadems, for whom they curiously dispose
 The red, the dainty white, the goodly damask rose ;
 For the rich ruby, pearl, and amethyst, men place
 In kings' imperial crowns, the circle that enchase.
 The brave carnation then, with sweet and sovereign power
 (So of his color called, although a July flower),
 With th' other of his kind, the speckled and the pale :
 Then th' odoriferous pink, that sends forth such a gale
 Of sweetness ; yet in scents as various as in sorts.
 The purple violet then, the pansy there supports :
 The marygold above t' adorn the arched bar :
 The double daisy, thrift, the button-bachelor,
 Sweet-william, sops-in-wine, the campion : and to these
 Some lavender they put, with rosemary and bays :
 Sweet marjoram, with her like, sweet basil rare for smell,
 With many a flower, whose name were now too long to tell :
 And rarely with the rest, the goodly fleur-de-lis.*

Drayton wrote also *The Barons' Wars*, an historical poem on the events of the time of Edward II. It is written in the stanza of Ariosto, and some portions of it possess a high degree of merit. Late in life he produced *The Battle of Agincourt*, a shorter poem, rather lyrical than narrative, to which we shall make reference in a future chapter.

Samuel Daniel was a contemporary of Drayton's, and in 1609 he completed and published a poem on *The Civil Wars between the two Houses of Lancaster and York*. It con-

* Drayton : *Polyolbion*, Song XV., 147. Compare this passage with the floral description in Milton's *Lycidas*, l. 132-151. Also with that in Shakspeare's *Winter's Tale*, Act IV., Scene iii.

sists of eight books written in eight-line stanzas, and the author adheres so closely to the facts of history that he has failed to infuse into it much of the poetic spirit. Yet, as Lowell says, "he has refined our tongue and deserves the praise his contemporaries concur in giving him of being 'well-languaged.' Writing two hundred and fifty years ago, he stands in no need of a glossary, and I have noted scarce a dozen words, and not more turns of phrase, in his works that have become obsolete. This certainly indicates both remarkable taste and equally remarkable judgment. There is an equable dignity in his thought and sentiment such as we rarely meet. His best poems always remind me of a table-land where, because all is so level, we are apt to forget on how lofty a plane we are standing."

In the year 1661 there appeared in London a prose work entitled *Mirabilis Annus; or, the Year of Prodigies and Wonders*. It was a book written by a Puritan for the comfort and encouragement of the faithful; and the many "signs and wonders which appeared that year in the heavens and elsewhere" were explained as foretelling the complete overthrow and destruction of Charles and his court.

"Let especially the oppressors and persecutors of the true church look to themselves," says the author of this curious book, "for the hand of the Lord in strange signs and wonders is lifted up among them; for let them know assuredly that the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things which shall come upon them make haste. The totall and finall overthrow of Pharaoh and the Egyptians (those cruell taskmasters and oppressors of the Israelites) did bear date not long after the wonderfull and prodigious signes which the Lord had shown in the midst of them."

In 1667, John Dryden, who never lost an opportunity to curry favor from the party in power, responded to this production by writing a poem which he called *Annus Mirabilis; or, the Year of Wonders*. It is a narrative of the

events of 1666, notable for the occurrence of the great Plague, the Fire of London, and the Victory over the Dutch. This wonderful year is treated by Dryden not as a year of disasters, but as one which added power and stability to the throne of Charles, and hence entirely confuted the doleful prophecies of the *Mirabilis Annus*. "I have chosen," says he, "the most heroic subject which any poet could desire: I have taken upon me to describe the motives, the beginning, the progress and successes of a most just and necessary war: in it the care, and management, and prudence of our king; the conduct and valor of a royal admiral, and of two incomparable generals; the invincible courage of our captains and seamen; and three glorious victories, the result of all. After this, I have in the Fire, the most deplorable, but, withal, the greatest argument that can be imagined."

The poem is written in the peculiar four-line stanza made popular by Davenant in his *Gondibert*, a heroic poem published fifteen years earlier. The first hundred stanzas describe the four days' sea-fight off the North Foreland; then the poet passes to the destruction of the Dutch Baltic trade and the wanton burning of the unarmed town of Brandaris; then he pays a handsome compliment to the newly-formed Royal Society, and closes with a labored depiction of the Fire of London and the somewhat apocryphal exertions of the king on that occasion. Hazlitt says: "The *Annus Mirabilis* is a tedious performance; it is a tissue of far-fetched, heavy, lumbering conceits, and in the worst style of what has been denominated metaphysical poetry." Macaulay says: "There is scarcely a single stanza in this long work to which imagination seems to have contributed anything. It is produced, not by creation, but by construction. It is made up not of pictures, but of inferences. We will give a single instance, and certainly a favorable instance,—a quatrain which Johnson has praised. Dryden is describing the sea-fight with the Dutch:

“ ‘Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball ;
And now their odors armed against them fly,
Some preciously by shattered porcelain fall,
And some by aromatic splinters die.’ ”

One of the most famous of historical poems is *The Campaign*, by Joseph Addison. It was written in 1704, and was designed to commemorate the great victory of the Duke of Marlborough at the battle of Blenheim. At the time of its production it was received with enthusiasm, and pronounced superior to anything of the kind ever before written. It is, however, entirely barren of poetic beauties, its imagery is strained and far-fetched, its versification stiff and artificial. Warton pronounces it “a gazette in rhyme.” Probably the only part of it which is now read is the once-famous simile in which Marlborough is compared to the Destroying Angel. Queen Anne’s ministers, it is said, went into raptures over this passage :

Behold in awful march and dread array
The long extended squadrons shape their way !
Death, in approaching terrible, imparts
An anxious horror to the bravest hearts ;
Yet do their beating breasts demand the strife,
And thirst of glory quells the love of life.
No vulgar fears can British minds control ;
Heat of revenge, and noble pride of soul,
O’erlook the foe, advantag’d by his post,
Lessen his numbers, and contract his host :
Though fens and floods possess’d the middle space
That unprovok’d they would have fear’d to pass,
Nor fens nor floods can stop Britannia’s bands,
When her proud foe rang’d on their borders stands.

But O, my muse, what numbers wilt thou find
To sing the furious troops in battle join’d !
Methinks I hear the drum’s tumultuous sound,
The victor’s shouts and dying groans confound ;
The dreadful burst of cannon rend the skies,
And all the thunder of the battle rise.

'Twas then great Marlborough's mighty soul was prov'd,
 That, in the shock of charging hosts, unmov'd
 Amidst confusion, horror and despair,
 Examin'd all the dreary scenes of war.
 In peaceful thought the field of death survey'd,
 To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid,
 Inspir'd repuls'd battalions to engage,
 And taught the doubtful battle where to rage.
 So when an angel, by divine command,
 With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
 Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,
 Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
 And, pleas'd th' Almighty's orders to perform,
 Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.

In this rather dreary division of narrative poetry we may include *The Field of Waterloo*, by Sir Walter Scott. As a poetical performance, this work fails to rise above the level of others of its class, and it is in no respect worthy of its great author. He tells us that it was written hastily while he was on a short tour upon the Continent, and "for the purpose of assisting in the Waterloo subscription." It is, as would be inferred from the title, a celebration of the victory of the British and their allies over Napoleon. It would have been as well for its author's reputation had the piece never been written. The following epigram, by a contemporary, expresses quite plainly the general opinion of the work:

On Waterloo's ensanguined plain,
 Full many a gallant man was slain;
 But none, by bullet or by shot,
 Fell half so flat as Walter Scott.

In America we have in this department *The Vision of Columbus* (1787), afterwards called *The Columbiad*, by Joel Barlow. This is a metrical narrative of events from the time of the discovery of America till the close of the Revolutionary War, written in the form of a vision as supposed to have been seen by Columbus while in his

prison in Spain. It is composed in a florid, declamatory style, and has little real poetic merit to recommend it. The completed work was published in 1807, and is said to represent the labor of half the life-time of its author; but it never attained to any considerable degree of popularity, and is fast being forgotten.

The student will discover, in the course of his reading, numerous short poems relating to historical subjects, but which are not, strictly speaking, historical poems. Such productions may usually be more properly classed in some other division of poetry, as descriptive poems, ballads, songs, etc. Not being subject to the restraints commonly imposed upon historical poetry, many of them possess eminent merit. As examples of this numerous class of poems, we mention Bishop Berkeley's *On the Planting of Arts in America*; Mrs. Hemans's *Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers*, Fitz-Greene Halleck's *Marco Bozarris*, and Byron's episode of *The Eve of Waterloo*.

CHAPTER VII.

DRAMATIC POETRY AND THE DRAMA.

Definitions—Origin of the Drama—Greek Drama—Mysteries and Miracles—The Play of St. Catherine—The Blessed Sacrament—The Harrowing of Hell—The Townley, Coventry, and Chester Collections—Morality Plays—John Skelton's Magnificence—Interludes—John Heywood—Ralph Roister Doister, by Nicholas Udall—Gorboduc, by Norton and Sackville—Damon and Pythias—Theatres in London—George Peele—Robert Greene—Christopher Marlowe—Doctor Faustus—John Lyly—Thomas Kyd—Thomas Nash—William Shakspeare—His Plays—Classification—Merchant of Venice—King Lear—Coriolanus—Hamlet—The Genius of Shakspeare—Ben Jonson—Cynthia's Revels—Masques—The Masque of Beauty—The Sad Shepherd—Beaumont and Fletcher—Philip Massinger—John Ford—John Webster—Minor Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age—Puritan Influence—Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix*—Milton's *Comus*—Suppression of the Theatres—Drama of the Restoration—Dryden's Comedies and Tragedies—Rhyming Tragedies—William Davenant—The Rehearsal, by the Duke of Buckingham—Milton's *Samson Agonistes*—Wycherly, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar—Thomas Otway—The Orphan—Venice Preserved—Nicholas Rowe—The Fair Penitent—Thomas Southern—Oroonoko—Dryden's Essay on Dramatic Poesy—Rymer on Tragedy—Jeremy Collier—Gradual Improvement of the Drama—Steele's *The Conscious Lovers*—Arthur Bedford *vs.* the Drama—The Beggar's Opera—Polly—Political Comedies—The Shakspearian Revival—David Garrick—Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*—R. B. Sheridan—Addison's *Cato*—*Irene*, by Dr. Johnson—Home's *Douglas*—Byron's Tragedies—Shelley's *Prometheus* and *The Cenci*—Bulwer Lytton—Robert Browning—Tennyson—Swinburne's Tragedies.

DRAMATIC poetry is poetry in which the action or narration is designed to be represented and not merely read or related.

A drama is a single performance, either in prose or poetry, designed to be so represented. By the expression, *the drama*, we mean the whole body of dramatic compositions considered together.

Dramas are of two kinds—tragedies and comedies. A tragedy, according to Aristotle's definition, is the representation of a serious, complete, and important action; in the modern drama this action invariably leads to some calamitous and fatal issue. Comedy is the representation of an action simple in its character, and usually exciting mirth. The term tragi-comedy is sometimes applied to those dramas which though serious and elevated in tone do not end tragically or with a disaster.

"The invention of dramatic art and of the theatre," says Schlegel, "seems a very obvious and natural one. Man has a great disposition to mimicry; when he enters vividly into the situation, sentiments, and passions of others, he involuntarily puts on a resemblance to them in his gestures. Children are perpetually going out of themselves; it is one of their chief amusements to represent those grown people whom they have had an opportunity of observing, or whatever strikes their fancy; and with the happy pliancy of their imagination they can exhibit all the characteristics of any dignity they may choose to assume, be it that of a father, a schoolmaster, or a king. But one step more was requisite for the invention of the drama; namely, to separate and extract the mimetic elements from the separate parts of social life, and to present them to itself again collectively in one mass; in many nations it has not been done."

The drama reached its highest perfection in ancient Greece. The new European drama, although resembling the Greek in many respects, was, in its origin and early progress, entirely uninfluenced by the ancient dramatists. Their power was not known nor felt by it until at a later period.

The origin of the English drama may be traced to the Miracle-Plays or Mysteries of the Middle Ages. These plays were founded on certain striking passages of Bible history, or on remarkable events in the lives of the saints, and were at first devised and used by the priesthood

for the purpose of imparting religious instruction to the masses. We can readily understand that in those days of ignorance and superstition the rude population, for whom these plays were arranged, would be much more easily influenced by the actual, visible representation of those wonderful occurrences than by listening to dull sermons and monotonous homilies from the pulpit. The earliest performance of a miracle-play, of which we have any record, occurred at the Convent of Dunstable about the year 1119. It was called *The Play of St. Catherine*, and was performed under the supervision of a schoolmaster and monk named Geoffrey, who afterwards became Abbot of St. Albans. It is probable that this play, like almost everything else at that time, had been brought from France, and it is not unlikely that it was performed in French. But, as these representations were designed principally for the amusement and instruction of the middle and lower classes, to whom French was an unknown tongue, we can but believe that many such plays were soon translated and acted in English. Theatrical performances of this kind were by no means rare in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Budaeus, the historian of the University of Paris, informs us that it was a very common thing, at that time, for teachers and pupils to engage in such exhibitions and entertainments. Fitz-Stephen, in his life of Thomas à Becket, written about 1182, says that London, in lieu of such theatrical shows and performances as were common at Rome, had plays of a sacred kind, "representing the miracles which saints have wrought, or the sufferings and constancy of martyrs." The plays were at first under the exclusive control of the clergy, being written and for the most part acted by the monks. The church was for the time being transformed into a theatre; the altar was changed into a stage with three divisions, one above the other; and the vestments of the sacristy supplied the desired costumes. The three platforms into which the stage was divided represented respectively Heaven, Earth, and Hell,

the actors going from one to another as the performance of their several parts required. In course of time the use of the churches for such purposes began to be forbidden. As early as the year 1258, we find that not only was this the case in many localities, but that the acting of the plays was no longer confined to the priesthood; for a regulation issued in that year for the government of certain monasteries provides that although actors may be entertained on account of their poverty, yet "let not their plays be seen nor heard, nor the performance of them allowed in the presence of the abbot or the monks." This interdiction was, however, by no means general, for in 1542—nearly three hundred years later—we find Bishop Bonner issuing a similar order to his clergy, forbidding "all manner of plays, games, or interludes to be played, set forth, or declared within their churches or chapels." When plays were performed in the open air, a temporary scaffold was erected for a stage, and sometimes this platform was set on wheels so as to be easily moved from place to place. At a later period it was customary to utilize the hall of a college, or the great banquet-room of a palace or nobleman's mansion, for the representation of these performances. Then, as the plays became still more secular in character, the open court-yards of the ancient inns were often used, and from these the plan and structure of the modern theatre were doubtless suggested.

Some idea of the character of these ancient religious dramas may be formed from the following brief analysis of a miracle-play which was lately discovered in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, and which is supposed to have been performed in the time of Edward IV. It is called *The Play of the Blessed Sacrament*, and dramatizes a miracle said to have been wrought in the forest of Aragon in 1461. The characters are the Saviour, five Jews, a bishop, a priest, a merchant, a physician and his servant. The merchant, who has the keys of the church, steals the Host and sells it to the Jews on condition that, should it really possess

miraculous powers, they will turn Christians. The Jews, to experiment, stab it with their daggers; it bleeds, and one of them goes mad at the sight. Then an attempt is made to nail it to a post, but the hand which strikes is torn off by some unseen power. The physician and his servant come to dress the wound, but, after a long comic scene, they are proven to be quacks and driven away. The Jews then boil the Host, but the water turns to blood. At last they cast it into a blazing furnace, but the oven bursts asunder, and an image of Christ arises and addresses the Jews, who at once become Christians. The merchant confesses his theft, and is pardoned on condition that he shall never again buy or sell. The bishop forms a procession, and, addressing the image, changes it back to bread again. And then the whole performance winds up with the delivery of a rhymed homily on the doctrine of transubstantiation.

The oldest manuscript now in existence of an English miracle-play is one preserved in the British Museum, and bearing the title of *The Harrowing of Hell*. It was written about the middle of the fourteenth century, but the play may have been composed at a much earlier time. It is a representation of the descent of Christ into hell for the purpose of bringing away the souls of the saints and prophets that have been in durance there.

There are still extant three remarkable sets of miracle-plays, known respectively as the Townley, the Coventry, and the Chester Collections. The Townley Collection includes thirty plays, and is thought to belong to the time of Henry VI. The Coventry Collection, so called because it is supposed to have belonged to the Gray Friars of Coventry, includes forty-two plays, and was written about the year 1468. The Chester Collection, written by Randle, a monk of Chester, includes twenty-four plays. The latter were first produced in Chester in 1268, and, with but few interruptions, were played there every year for more than three centuries. It will suffice our purpose to give merely the

titles of some of the best-known miracle-plays: *The Creation of the World*; *The Deluge*; *Cain and Abel*; *Abraham*; *Jacob and Esau*; *The Crucifixion*; *The Resurrection*; *The Ascension*; *Doomsday*. The subjects of all these, and of a multitude of others, are based upon scriptural events and passages, and are distinguished as miracle-plays. What were known as mysteries are of a similar general character, but are usually based upon subjects taken from the lives of the saints. Among the latter we mention *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene*; *The Barrenness of Anna*; and *The Play of St. Catherine*.

"Rude, gross, and childish as were the miracle-plays," says R. G. White, "yet they contained the germ of our drama; and from them its development, for a long time slow but never checked, can be traced up to the sudden splendid maturity of the Elizabethan era."

Gradually, and by a perfectly natural process, allegorical personages came to be represented in the plays. Abstract ideas and the virtues and vices—such as Truth, Pity, Justice, Pride, and Death—were impersonated oftentimes in the same play in which appeared also the Deity and his angels, the saints and the patriarchs. As time wore on and these plays became less exclusively the property of the ecclesiastics and the church, they lost their distinctive religious character, and finally the mysteries and miracles gave place to a new kind of representation called Moralities. In these morality-plays all the characters were the embodiments of abstract ideas. The action was generally simple, its gravity being frequently relieved by comic scenes. To furnish forth "a fit of mirth" on appropriate occasions no character was more suitable than the Devil, and hence he, of all the personages formerly represented in the mysteries, was retained to do duty in the moralities. He was represented much as we still see him pictured in the prints of last century, with horns and hoofs, a shaggy body, and a barbed tail. He was the visible personification of all wickedness. Side by side with him, and indeed sometimes

supplanting him entirely, was another character called the Vice. He was a milder personage than the Devil, and was usually dressed in the costume of the court fool or jester. He still survives in the clown of the traveling circus. An idea of the general style of the moralities may be derived from the following brief analysis of the play of *Magnificence*, written by the poet-laureate John Skelton, and printed some time previous to 1523. The hero, Magnificence, is cursed with a number of friends, such as Fancy, Counterfeit-countenance, Crafty-conveyance, Courtly-abusion, Cloaked-collusion, and Folly. These, imposing upon the liberality of Magnificence, consume his substance and leave him to the tender mercies of Adversity and Poverty. Finally he is taken prisoner by Mischief, and Despair urges him to commit suicide.* As he is about to comply, Good-hope stays his hand, and Redress, Circumspection, and Perseverance bring him back to his right senses. The piece is a very saurian for length, and its prevailing heaviness is relieved here and there by sallies of the coarsest kind of wit. Skelton was the author of another morality-play very similar in kind, called *The Necromancer*.

Little by little the moralities began to lose their exclusively allegorical character and to approach more nearly to the regular drama. Sometimes they were written with special reference to a particular public occasion and designed to be played in the interval between a dinner and a banquet—the banquet being but the dessert to the dinner and served in another room. These plays were called Interludes, and were, of course, shorter than the ordinary moralities. Into these pieces subjects of a grotesque and merry nature, as being better suited to the occasion, were introduced. During the period of religious controversy in the sixteenth century, the interludes were used by both parties as a very convenient means for throwing ridicule

* The student will be reminded of the similar allegorical representations of Despair, by Niccols, Spenser, and Bunyan, in the *Legend of Cordelia*, the *Faerie Queene*, and the *Pilgrim's Progress*, respectively.

upon the doctrines and practices of their opponents. The most noted writer of interludes was John Heywood, a singer and player of virginals at the court of Henry VIII. He was a staunch Catholic, and yet in many of his plays he took occasion to ridicule the foibles and vices of the clergy. His earliest production, printed in 1533, is entitled *A mery play between the Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate and neybor Pratte*. The curate has given permission to both the pardoner and the friar to use his church. The pardoner's object is to show his relics; the friar's object is to preach; and the leading object of both is money. The friar comes first, but before he can begin his discourse the pardoner enters and disturbs him. They quarrel as to which shall have the precedence, and finally resort to cuffs and blows. The curate, hearing the noise, rushes in and tries to pacify and separate them. But failing in this, he calls in neighbor Pratt to his assistance, and they endeavor to carry the belligerents to the stocks. In vain; for now the pardoner and the friar unite their forces and drive the curate and his assistant from the church, and the play quietly ends. As an example of Heywood's satire which he delighted slyly to direct against all parties, we observe that the friar's sermon is directed against covetousness, and is full of allusions to the voluntary poverty of his order, and yet he announces his intention of taking up a collection, and urges his hearers to contribute liberally. Likewise, the pardoner, like the pardoner in the *Canterbury Tales*, has for sale the most ridiculous relics, warranted to be genuine, such as the big toe of the Holy Trinity, "the blessed jawbone of all the saints," and

Of our Ladye a relyke full good,
Her bongrace, which she ware with her French hood,
Whan she wente oute al wayes for sonne bornynge.

Another of Heywood's pieces, abounding in merry jokes and witty observations, is *The Four P's*, in which a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Poticary, and a Pedlar vie with each other as

to which can tell the biggest lie. The Palmer gains the day when he says that never in his life has he seen a woman out of patience.

The interludes were but the last step in the process of development previous to the appearance of the regular drama. Considered alone, without reference to what followed, the mysteries, the moralities, and the interludes are scarcely worthy of a place in English literature. But regarded as so many stages in the evolution of what we are proud to term the British drama, their study becomes of the highest interest and importance.

In 1551 was written the first piece which can properly lay claim to the title of English comedy. It is the play of *Ralph Roister Doister*, and its author was Nicholas Udall, a schoolmaster of Eton. It is divided into five acts, and each act is subdivided into scenes. The characters are all drawn from real life, and there is that gradual and artistic development of the action which is necessary to every well-constructed drama. And yet it is a coarse performance when judged by our own standards of morality and public decency. The scene is laid in London, the hero is Ralph Roister Doister, and the heroine a widow named Dame Custance. The other characters are Matthew Merrygreek, a poor relation of the hero; Garvin Goodluck, a merchant; Dobinet Doughty, the merchant's servant; Madge Mumblecrust, the widow's aunt; Sim Suresby, Tibbet Talkapace, and Annot Alyface. Ralph, having just come into the possession of a magnificent inheritance, is surrounded by a number of pretended friends, who, to further their own designs, lead him into all manner of absurd and ridiculous situations. The play ends with the return of Goodluck from a voyage, and his wedding with Dame Custance, to which Ralph is invited. The piece is written in lines of unequal length, with nothing to distinguish it from prose except the rhymes.

The first regular tragedy in English was acted before the queen, at Whitehall, in 1562. It was the tragedy of *Gor-*

boduc or *Ferrex* and *Porrex*. The play is divided into five acts, of which the first three were written by Thomas Norton and the last two by Thomas Sackville, already known to us through his connection with the *Mirror for Magistrates*. The following is the analysis of the play as given by Warton: "Gorboduc, a king of Britain about six hundred years before Christ, made, in his life-time, a division of his kingdom to his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex. The two young princes, within five years, quarreled for universal sovereignty. A civil war ensued, and Porrex slew his elder brother Ferrex. Their mother, Videna, who loved Ferrex best, revenged his death by entering Porrex's chamber in the night and murdering him in his sleep. The people, exasperated at the cruelty and treachery of this murder, rose in rebellion, and killed both Gorboduc and Videna. The nobility then assembled, collected an army, and destroyed the rebels. An intestine war commenced between the chief lords: the succession of the crown became uncertain and arbitrary for want of a lineal royal issue: and the country, destitute of a king, and wasted by domestic slaughter, was reduced to a state of the most miserable desolation."*

This play is written in blank verse constructed with great care and regularity. But as each sentence usually terminates with the line, the style appears to be labored and heavy, and the piece is, on the whole, dull and unattractive.

In 1566 the old story of *Damon and Pythias*, cast into English tragi-comedy by Richard Edwards, was acted before the queen at Christ Church, Oxford. It was written in rhyme, and by reason of its happy ending and its amusing interludes is more of a comedy than a tragedy. Edwards also dramatized the *Knight's Tale* of Chaucer, which, under the title of *Palamon and Arcyte*, was acted before the queen in the same year.

* *History of English Poetry*, p. 587.

In 1574, through the influence of the Earl of Leicester, a patent was granted to James Burbadge and others "to use, exercise, and occupy the art and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies, interludes, stage-plays, and other like" in the city of London, or in any other city, without hinderance, provided that the said plays be seen and allowed by the master of revels, "and that the same be not shown or published in the time of common prayer, or in the time of great and common plague in the city of London."

From this time the popularity of the drama and the public taste for theatrical entertainments increased with great rapidity. Special societies of professional actors began to come into existence and to supplant the amateur actors and the strolling singers and tumblers by whom the acting of stage-plays had hitherto been mainly performed. In 1576 the first theatre—the *Blackfriars*—was built in the precinct formerly occupied by the Blackfriars' Monastery. In the same year two other theatres were built in Shoreditch; they were called *The Curtain* and *The Theatre*. In 1594 the Blackfriars company built on the south bank of the Thames the famous *Globe* theatre, memorable on account of Shakspeare's connection with it. All these theatres were built outside of the jurisdiction of the municipality of the city, which, being Puritan in its tendencies, had long carried on a war against the players and all theatrical entertainments. The corporation of London argued that such amusements tended to "the desecration of the Sabbath and saints' days;" that they brought young people together under "unmeet circumstances;" that they were but encouragers of intemperance and tavern brawls; that they caused a sinful waste of money which had better be given to the poor; that they were the means of many people being hurt by the falling of scaffolds and by the weapons and gunpowder used during the performances; and that through the bringing together of such great crowds, they tended to increase and disseminate the plague.

The Globe theatre was octagonal in shape, and, with the exception of the stage, which was protected by a thatched roof, was entirely open at the top. "The common people could enter as well as the rich; there were sixpenny, two-penny, even penny seats; but they could not see it without money. If it rained, and it often rains in London, the people in the pit—butchers, mercers, bakers, sailors, apprentices—received the streaming rain upon their heads. I suppose they did not trouble themselves about it; it was not so long since they began to pave the streets of London; and when men, like these, have had experience of sewers and puddles, they are not afraid of catching cold. While waiting for the piece, they amuse themselves after their fashion, drink beer, crack nuts, eat fruit, howl, and now and then resort to their fists; they have been known to fall upon the actors, and turn the theatre upside down. . . . Above them, on the stage, were the spectators able to pay a shilling, the elegant people, the gentle folk. These were sheltered from the rain, and if they chose to pay an extra shilling, could have a stool. To this were reduced the prerogatives of rank and the devices of comfort: it often happened that there were not stools enough; then they lie down on the ground; this was not a time to be dainty. . . . Remember that they were hardly out of the Middle Age, and that in the Middle Age man lived on a dung-hill."*

There were in these theatres no attempts at artistic deception; there were no painted scenes. A few screens of cloth or tapestry were hung up to enable the actors to make their entrances and their exits; nothing more. When there was a change in the place of action, the spectators were notified of the fact by a placard bearing the name Rome, Venice, Verona, London, a garden, a cave, or whatever it might be. Soon, however, other expedients began to be resorted to. If a bed were pushed out upon

* Taine, I., 360.

the stage, the audience forthwith imagined a bedroom; if a table covered with bottles, an inn was suggested; if a canopy and a gilded chair, a royal palace. But, after all, a very great deal was left to be supplied entirely by the imaginations of the hearers. Says Sir Philip Sidney, writing in the very earliest days of the English stage: "The player when he comes in must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceiv'd. Now shall you have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By and by, we hear news of shipwreck in the the same place, then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster, with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave: while, in the meantime, two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?"*

This absence of scenery and of any material aids to the illusion of the senses no doubt obliged the dramatic author to depend more upon his own resources and his powers of word-painting. And it is to this fact that we owe many of those inimitable descriptions and word-pictures which abound in the writings of the early dramatists.

No lady appeared on the stage until after the middle of the seventeenth century; but the female parts were acted by boys or young men—very often the singing-boys of the royal chapel. And for a long time no lady attended the representations as a spectator, unless her face were hidden by a mask. The plays were usually performed very early in the day, and were announced by the hoisting of a flag at the summit of the theatre. The performance commenced with three bugle flourishes, after which a solemn person, dressed in black, came forward and pronounced the prologue. At the end of the play it was customary for the actors to fall upon their knees and pray for the

* *Works of Sir Philip Sidney.* Edition of 1674, p. 562.

blessing of heaven upon the queen, and then, after the recitation of a comic ballad by the jester or clown, the audience was dismissed.

Between the years 1580 and 1596, very many dramas of a high order of merit were written. So swift and plentiful was their production, that we know of more than a hundred different plays having been performed during this time by four of the eleven companies then in existence. They were written in almost every variety of style—in prose, in rhyme, and in blank verse. Our space will allow us to do but little more than merely mention the most important of these works.

George Peele, a graduate of Oxford, was the author of several plays, some of which attained to considerable popularity. He is said to have been the first to try his skill in the composition of those peculiar historical plays in which Shakspeare afterwards excelled. His *Edward I.* was the forerunner and probably the suggestor of Marlowe's *Edward II.* and of Shakspeare's *Richard II.* *The Love of King David and Fair Bethseba* is conceded to be his masterpiece. *The Arraignment of Paris* and *The Battle of Alcazar* are among his earliest works. *The Old Wives' Tale*, published in 1595, is remarkable for the resemblance of its plot to that of Milton's *Comus*. Hudson says of Peele: "His contributions to the drama were mainly in the single art of poetry. In the development of character and in the high art of dramatic composition and organization he added very little; his genius being far unequal to this high task, and his judgment still more so."

Robert Greene was a graduate of Cambridge. He was a prolific writer, not only of dramatic compositions but of tracts and pamphlets on the most miscellaneous subjects. One of the latter—a novel entitled *Pandosto*—is worthy of remembrance as having been utilized by Shakspeare in *The Winter's Tale*. Among Greene's dramatic works we mention *The History of Orlando Furioso*; *Alphonsus, King of Arragon*; *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. He was not

equal in poetical power to Peele, but he excelled him in invention and in quickness of wit as well as in exuberance of fancy.

Christopher Marlowe, also a graduate of Cambridge, ranks among the greatest dramatists of the period. His first work was *Tamburlaine the Great*, a tragedy in two parts, published in 1590. This drama is said to have been the first play in the English language designed for public representation which was written in blank verse. But this is probably untrue. We know that blank verse was used in many plays written for special occasions some years before *Tamburlaine* was penned; and the most that we can say for this claim in behalf of Marlowe is that he was very likely the first to make blank verse a popular form for dramatic composition. In regard to this drama, Dyce says: "With very little discrimination of character, with much extravagance of incident, with no pathos where pathos was to be expected, *Tamburlaine* is nevertheless a very impressive drama, and undoubtedly superior to all the English tragedies which preceded it; superior to them in the effectiveness with which the events are brought out, in the poetic feeling which animates the whole, and in the nerve and variety of the versification." Marlowe's next play, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, written about 1590, but not printed until 1606, is, without doubt, his greatest work. It is founded upon the same popular legend which Goethe adopted as the groundwork of his *Faust*. As regards the plot, it was derived from a prose-romance very popular at that time, entitled *The History of Dr. Faustus*; but Marlowe has infused into the drama so many thoughts of surpassing beauty and grandeur, that he has made it all his own. The hero in Marlowe's tragedy, says Taine, "is a living, struggling, natural, personal man, not the philosophic type which Goethe has created, but a primitive and genuine man, hot-headed, fiery, the slave of his passions, the sport of his dreams, wholly engrossed in the present, moulded by his lusts, contradictions, and follies,

who, amidst noise and starts, cries of pleasure and anguish, rolls, knowing it and willing it, down the slope and crags of his precipice. The whole English drama is here, as a plant in its seed, and Marlowe is to Shakspeare what Perugino was to Raphael." The plot of the tragedy is briefly this: Faustus is a necromancer who has brought himself into direct communication with supernatural beings. He prays Lucifer to aid him in the acquisition of universal knowledge and a magician's power. Mephistopheles, the prime minister of Lucifer, visits him in order to perfect arrangements. A good angel and a bad angel each tries to influence Faustus, but Mephistopheles and the bad angel prevail. A contract is drawn up by which Faustus agrees, in consideration of receiving certain supernatural endowments, to surrender, at the end of twenty-four years, his soul and body to the fiend. He is thus enabled to pass from one place to another with the rapidity of lightning, to command the forces of nature, to wield the elements, to astonish the world with his power. And yet the knowledge of the terrible price at which he has bought this potentiality haunts him, and urges him to a repentance of which he finds himself incapable. The last hour arrives and Lucifer claims his own. The skill with which Marlowe has depicted the last scene, the fearful display of mental agony with which the play closes, has never been surpassed. We transcribe a few lines:

(*Faustus.*) . . . O Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damn'd perpetually!
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come;
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul!
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd.

Oh, I'll leap up to heaven!—Who pulls me down?—
 See, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
 One drop of blood will save me: O my Christ!—
 Rend not my heart for naming of my Christ;
 Yet will I call on him: O, spare me, Lucifer!—
 Where is it now? 'tis gone:
 And, see, a threatening arm, an angry brow!
 Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,
 And hide me from the heavy wrath of heaven!
 No!

Then will I headlong run into the earth:
 Gape, earth! Oh, no, it will not harbor me!
 You stars that reign'd at my nativity,
 Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
 Now draw up Faustus, like a foggy mist,
 Into the entrails of yon laboring clouds,
 That, when you vomit forth into the air,
 My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths;
 But let my soul mount and ascend to heaven!

[*The clock strikes the half hour.*]

Oh, half the hour is past! 'twill all be past anon. . . .
 Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,
 A hundred thousand, and at last be saved!

* * * * *

It strikes, it strikes! Now, body, turn to air,
 Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell!
 O soul, be chang'd into small water-drops,
 And fall into the ocean, ne'er to be found!*

The other works of Marlowe are *The Jew of Malta*, which may have furnished some remote suggestions for Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*; the tragedy of *Edward II.*; the *Massacre at Paris*, a very inferior performance; and the tragedy of *Dido, Queen of Carthage*. The student who desires to acquire a thorough and personal knowledge of English dramatic literature will study *Tamburlaine* and *Doctor Faustus*, and he will compare *Edward II.* with the "histories" of Shakspeare.

* *Marlowe's Works.* Dyce's Edition, p. 134.

Marlowe was a type of the literary adventurers and playwrights of his time, "ill-regulated, dissolute, outrageously vehement and audacious, but grand and sombre with the genuine poetic frenzy; pagan, moreover, and rebellious in manners and creed." His career was short and disgraceful. He died of a wound inflicted by his own dagger in the hands of one Francis Archer. He was only thirty years old. Had his powerful genius been properly balanced and restrained, and had he lived as many years as Shakespeare, who can conjecture from the brilliant promises he left behind him what he might have accomplished? Drayton said of him:

"Next Marlowe, bathéd in the Thespian springs,
Had in him those brave translunary things
That the first poets had: his raptures were
All air and fire, which made his verses clear;
For that fine madness still he did retain
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain."*

John Lyly, better known as the author of *Euphues*, was a dramatist of some ability. His plays for the most part relate to classical subjects, as the story of *Endymion*; *Alexander and Campaspe*; and *Sappho and Phaon*; and all except two—among the nine which we have—are written in prose.

Thomas Kyd is remembered as being the author of *The Spanish Tragedy*; or, *Hieronimo is mad again*, and as the reputed author of *Jeronimo*, of which the *Spanish Tragedy* is a sequel. These dramas were very popular in their day, and both abound in passages which show a wonderful power of conception on the part of the author. White says that the two dramas ascribed to Kyd "left stronger traces of influence upon Shakspeare's works than any other, or than all others written by his predecessors or his contemporaries."

* To Henry Reynolds, of *Poets and Poesie* (1627).

Thomas Nash was associated with other dramatists in the production of a number of dramas. Among these were the comedies entitled *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, and *The Isle of Dogs*.

We pass over the names of a large number of dramatists whose works appeared in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. To the ordinary student, an enumeration of these works would be a mere waste of time, and he who desires to make an exhaustive study of the drama of this period cannot fail to find, in the course of reading which we shall indicate, the means of obtaining all the information regarding them that can be desired.

William Shakspeare, the greatest of English poets and the greatest dramatist the world has ever seen, next claims our attention. Of his life we know comparatively nothing. He was born in 1564, at Stratford-on-Avon. He received but an indifferent education, married at the age of nineteen, and three years afterwards, being driven either by poverty or by the promptings of genius, came to London and associated himself with the dramatists and playwrights who frequented the theatres of that city. He had probably been influenced to this step by Richard Burbadge, himself a Warwickshire man and the greatest tragic actor of the day, and by Thomas Greene, a native of Stratford and an influential member of the Globe theatre company. And it is with this same Globe company that we find Shakspeare eventually connecting himself. In 1589, Shakspeare's name appears upon a list of players and joint proprietors of the Blackfriars theatre, standing the eleventh among fifteen. In 1596, after the company had built the Globe, his name stands the fourth on the list, indicating that he must have attained to a much more important position in the partnership. As was customary with the young dramatists of that time, it is probable that he made himself useful to his company, both as an actor and as an arranger of pieces. His first work in the latter capacity was the retouching of old plays, adapting them

to the exigencies of the theatre and to the tastes of the audience. It was at this period and in this way that some of his most markedly inferior pieces were produced. Among these we may mention *Titus Andronicus*, the *First Part of Henry VI.*, and *Pericles*. But the remodeling of old plays seemed to kindle into a flame the spark of genius within him, and he began to strike out into new and independent paths. His first original work was *Love's Labor's Lost*, followed in a short time by *The Comedy of Errors*. Then he passed into the fantastic regions of fairy-land, and gave us the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Afterwards appeared in rapid succession the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; *Romeo and Juliet*; *All's Well that Ends Well*; and the first four of his *Histories*. In 1597 he produced his masterpiece in comedy, *The Merchant of Venice*. Then he retouched the old play of *Taming the Shrew*, and wrote *Henry IV.* and *Henry V.*, followed by *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; *Much Ado About Nothing*; *As You Like It*; and *Twelfth Night*. Between 1602 and 1608 his great tragedies were produced,—*Hamlet*; *Julius Cæsar*; *Othello*; *Macbeth*; *Lear*; *Antony and Cleopatra*; *Coriolanus*; and the less perfect works, *Measure for Measure*; *Timon of Athens*; and *Troilus and Cressida*. In his old age, from 1608 to 1613, he wrote *Cymbeline*; *The Winter's Tale*; and the *Tempest*. His last work was probably *Henry VIII.*, in which he was assisted by Fletcher. It is said that in these latter years he also wrote, in conjunction with Fletcher, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, a dramatization of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*; but this assertion is in great part mere conjecture.

Shakspeare's works may be divided into three general classes,—histories, tragedies, and comedies. And these classes may again be sub-divided with reference to the particular subject of each play and the sources from which it was derived. But a preferable mode of classification is one based mainly upon the sources of the plays, with reference, first, to their literary character, and second, to their nationality. Thus classified, they arrange themselves

under three general divisions, histories, legends, and fictions, and these are subdivided with reference to the countries from whose chronicles or traditions the materials and suggestions for the plays were drawn.

The following table will illustrate this latter method of arrangement, and will be found convenient for purposes of reference:

I. HISTORIES.

(a) ENGLISH:

1. *King John* (1595?).
2. *Richard II.* (1593?).
3. *Henry IV.* (1596-98).
4. *Henry V.* (1599).
5. *Henry VI.* (1588?).
6. *Richard III.* (1594).
7. *Henry VIII.* (1612-13).

The materials for these plays were drawn mainly from the chronicles of Holinshed, published in 1577.

(b) ROMAN:

1. *Coriolanus* (1607-10).
2. *Julius Caesar* (1601?).
3. *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606-07?).

Derived from North's English translation of *Plutarch's Lives* (1579), through the French version of Amyot.

II. LEGENDS.

(a) BRITISH:

1. *King Lear* (1605-06). Derived originally from the chronicles of Geoffrey of Monmouth. But Shakspeare may have read the story in Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicles*; in Holinshed's *Chronicles*; in the *Mirror for Magistrates*; in the second book of the *Faerie Queene*; and in Warner's *Albion's England*.

2. *Cymbeline* (1609?). The historical portions are principally taken from Holinshed's *Chronicles*; but the dramatic incidents are derived from the story of *Bernardo da Genoa*, the ninth novel of the second day of Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

(b) SCOTTISH:

Macbeth (1605-06). Derived from Holinshed's *Chronicles of Scotland*.

(c) DANISH:

Hamlet (1601-02). From the Danish chronicle of Saxo Grammaticus, and perhaps from an older play of the same name.

(d) GREEK AND ROMAN:

1. *Troilus and Cressida* (1606-07). From Chaucer's *Troilus and Creseide*; Caxton's *Recuyell of the historyes of Troy* (1471); Lydgate's *Troy-Book* (printed in 1513); and Chapman's translation of Homer (1596).

2. *Timon of Athens* (1607-08). From North's translation of *Phutarch's Lives*; Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*; and a French or Latin version of Lucian's *Dialogues*.

3. *Titus Andronicus* (1588). From an older play.

III. FICTIONS.

(a) SOURCES UNKNOWN:

1. *Love's Labor's Lost* (1588-89?).
2. *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1590-91?).
3. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1598-99).
4. *The Tempest* (1609-12?).

(b) FROM ENGLISH SOURCES:

1. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1590-91). Suggested in part by Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*; but the episode of Pyramus and Thisbe was probably derived from the story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, although it may have been borrowed partly from Chaucer's *Legend of Goode Women*.

2. *As You Like It* (1600). From a romance by Thomas Lodge, entitled *Rosalynde*; *Euphues's Golden Legacy, found after his death in his cell at Silixedra* (1590). The germ of this story is found in the Coke's *Tale of Gamelyn*, attributed to Chaucer.

3. *A Winter's Tale* (1611). From Robert Greene's metrical romance, entitled *Pandosto: the Triumph of Time* (1588).

(c) FROM ITALIAN SOURCES:

1. *Romeo and Juliet* (1591-93). Derived from the Italian stories of Luigi da Porto and Matteo Bandello, which had been translated into English poetry by Arthur Brooke (1562), and into English prose by William Painter in his *Palace of Pleasure* (1567).

2. *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-97). From two stories in the

Gesta Romanorum and the *Il Pecorone* of Giovanni Fiorentino, published in 1558.

3. *The Taming of the Shrew* (1596-97). Borrowed from Gascoigne's *Supposes* (1566). But Gascoigne derived it from the *Gli Suppositi* of Ariosto (1502).

4. *Much Ado About Nothing* (1599-1600). Founded upon a story in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516). The story is also found in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, II., iv.

5. *Twelfth Night* (1601). From the *Historie of Apollonius and Silla*, adapted by Barnabe Rich from the Italian of Bandello (1581), and from an Italian comedy entitled *Gl' Ingannati* (1547).

6. *All's Well That Ends Well* (1601-02). From a translation in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, of the ninth novel of the third day of Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

7. *Measure for Measure* (1603). Founded on a drama by George Whetstone, entitled *The Right Excellent and Famous Hystorie of Promos and Cassandra* (1578). But Whetstone derived his materials from the Italian of Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*.

8. *Othello* (1604?) From Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*.

(d) MISCELLANEOUS :

1. *The Comedy of Errors* (1589?). An imitation of the *Menoechmi* of Plautus.

2. *Pericles* (1608-09). From the *Gesta Romanorum* and Gower's *Confessio Amantis*.

It would, of course, be transcending the limits and designs of this work for us to enter into a lengthy critical discussion of the merits of Shakspeare's works, or of the extent and character of his genius as a dramatist. No student of English literature—even though he should desire to pursue only a superficial course of reading—can afford to neglect the personal acquaintance and thorough study of at least two or three of his masterpieces. He should begin with the *Merchant of Venice*, by all odds the best of his comedies. Every scene in this delightful play is well worth the most careful study. Says Hudson: "The praise of this drama is in the mouth of nearly all the critics. That the praise is well deserved appears in that, from the reopening

of the theatres at the Restoration till the present day, the play has kept its place on the stage; while it is also among the first of the poet's works to be read, and the last to be forgotten, its interest being as durable in the closet as on the boards. . . . The *Merchant of Venice* is justly distinguished among Shakspeare's dramas, not only for the general felicity of the language, but also for the beauty of particular scenes and passages. For descriptive power the opening scene of Antonio and his friends is not easily rivaled, and can hardly fail to live in the memory of any one having an eye for such things. Equally fine in its way is the scene of Tubal and Shylock, where the latter is so torn with the struggle of conflicting passions; his heart now sinking with grief at the account of his fugitive daughter's expenses, now leaping with malignant joy at the report of Antonio's losses. The trial-scene, with its tugging vicissitudes of passion and its hush of terrible expectation, now ringing with the Jew's sharp, spiteful snaps of malice, now made musical with Portia's strains of eloquence, now holy with Antonio's tender breathings of friendship, and dashed, from time to time, with Gratiano's fierce jets of wrath and fiercer jets of mirth, is hardly surpassed in tragic power anywhere; and as it forms the catastrophe proper, so it concentrates the interest of the whole play. Scarcely inferior in its kind is the night-scene of Lorenzo and Jessica, bathed as it is in love, moonlight, 'touches of sweet harmony' and soul-lifting discourse, followed by the grave moral reflections of Portia, as she approaches her home and sees its light and hears its music. . . . Critics, indeed, may easily quarrel with this sportive after-piece; but it stands approval by the tribunal to which criticism itself must bow—the spontaneous feelings of such as are willing to be made cheerful and healthy, without beating their brains about the *how* and *wherefore*.”*

Among the great tragedies it is difficult to select one

* Hudson: *Life, Art, and Characters of Shakspeare*. Vol. I., p. 295.

which is better suited for study than the others. All possess the highest excellence, and all should receive the student's attention. An excellent plan would be to begin with *King Lear* and end with *Hamlet*. Of *King Lear*, Hazlitt says: "It is the best of Shakspeare's plays, because it is the one in which he is the most in earnest. He was here fairly caught in the web of his own imagination. The passion which he has taken as his subject is that which strikes its root deepest into the human heart, of which the band is hardest to be loosed, and the canceling and tearing to pieces of which gives the greatest revulsion to the frame. This depth of nature, this force of passion, this tug and war of the elements of our being, this firm faith in filial piety, and the giddy anarchy and whirling tumult of the thoughts at finding this prop failing it; the contrast between the fixed, immovable basis of natural affection and the rapid, irregular starts of imagination, suddenly wrenched from all its accustomed holds and resting-places in the soul, this is what Shakspeare has given, and what nobody else but he could give."

Next after *Lear* read *Coriolanus* as an example of what the great dramatist has done in another field, and of what he was capable of doing in his later and more mature years. It is, without doubt, the best of his plays from Roman history. "I hold it," says Hudson, "to be among his greatest triumphs in organization; I cannot point out, I believe no one has pointed out, a single instance where the parts might have been better ordered for the proper effect of the whole; while the interest never once flags or falters, nor suffers any break or diversion from the beginning to the end; rather say, it holds on with ever-increasing force throughout, and draws all the details into its current, so that the unity of impressions is literally perfect."

The study of Shakspeare may very properly be closed with *Hamlet*. It is the most remarkable—in some respects it is the greatest—of his works. It is, indeed, a great psychological study, requiring, for a proper appreciation

of it, both maturity of thought and depth of research. "*Hamlet*," says Schlegel, "is single in its kind: a tragedy of thought inspired by continual and never-satisfied meditation on human destiny and the dark perplexity of the events of this world, and calculated to call forth the same meditation in the minds of the spectators." Another German critic says: "To us this tragedy seems to be a question addressed to fate. It is the first part of a work similar to the Arabian poem, the book of Job, an earnest, solemn setting in opposition, the one to the other, of the good and the evil in the world, neither coming off victorious; a true riddle without answer, so intended by the poet; and the longer he meditated it, the more distinctly did it take this shape. He paints a dark, mysterious side of man's being, a gloomy night-piece, putting into it everything that is dark in his otherwise clear soul. And therefore he chooses those mournful colors, the northern sky, the lonely sea, the sluggish, weedy brook, the sandy grave. Therefore he makes the dead awake, therefore he lets madness pass over the stage—madness real, feigned, and doubtful. Where the highest, the holiest, is uncertain, confounded, out of place, where the cry for God and for justice rings unanswered and unheard, there everything gathers that acts on both soul and body with a dark, weird effect, with the coldness of death. Over the misery of the shattered family of Lear the lightning flashes, the avenging thunder rolls; over the gloomy waste in which the State of Denmark is swamped, settles hyperborean night with clammy horror. Only beyond these graves glimmer the ruddy streaks of a new dawn."*

It is impossible to form any correct and complete conception of the dramatic genius of Shakspeare without examining and studying *all* his works, and this the earnest student will endeavor to do. By this means he will be able to understand something of the process of development by

* H. A. Werner, in *Jahrbuch der deutschen Shakspeare-Gesellschaft* (1870), p. 81.

which this great dramatist and poet reached the summit of excellence in his chosen work ; and he will discover that whatever he did, he did as an artist, with an artist's ideal and an artist's power. "Shakspeare is the pride of his nation. A late poet has, with propriety, called him 'the genius of the British isles.' He was the idol of his contemporaries: during the interval, indeed, of puritanical fanaticism, which broke out in the next generation, and rigorously proscribed all liberal arts and literature, and during the reign of the second Charles, when his works were either not acted at all, or, if so, very much changed and disfigured, his fame was awhile obscured, only to shine forth again about the beginning of the last century with more than its original brightness; and since then it has but increased in lustre with the course of time, and for centuries to come it will, like an Alpine *avalanche*, continue to gather strength at every moment of its progress."*

Among Shakspeare's younger contemporaries and competitors, Ben Jonson occupies, without doubt, the first place. And yet his works are beyond comparison inferior to Shakspeare's. Some of his dramas possess a high degree of merit, but they are all tinged with their author's prevailing tendency to pedantry and a servile imitation of classical models. He was persuaded that "a fine philosophy—a special nobleness and dignity—ought to be introduced into comedy." On account of his school-learning he affected a superiority over those around him, and, as a consequence, he was regarded and treated as a disgraceful pedant who had set himself up as the censor of the stage and of public manners. But very few of his dramas were received with favor by his contemporaries, and not one of them would please a popular audience at the present time. Indeed, they are characterized as being hard and dry, totally wanting in tenderness and delicacy, and the natural flow of fancy and imagination which constitute such a

* Schlegel: *Dramatic Literature*. Bohn's Edition, p. 345.

charm in Shakspeare's dramas. And yet they display an immense amount of learning, and no little dignity and earnestness. His first work, *Every Man in his Humor*, when presented upon the stage in 1596, was a complete failure—the action, the characters, everything but the language being Italian. At Shakspeare's suggestion some alterations were made, its action was transferred to England, and two years after, when it was again presented, it met with the most enthusiastic reception. From that time Jonson's reputation was established, and although his success was not of the highest, he occupied a place among his fellow-dramatists inferior to Shakspeare's only. *Every Man Out of his Humor*, *Cynthia's Revels*, and *The Poetaster* followed in quick succession. In these, the dramatical form is made to serve as a cloak for the fierce satire which the author directs first against the courtiers and then against the poets. *Cynthia's Revels*, like many others of Jonson's pieces, is an allegorical comedy resembling those of the old Greek comedian Aristophanes. Mercury and Cupid, entering upon the stage, engage in a good-natured quarrel, in the course of which Cupid announces the plan of the play:

“The huntress and queen of these groves, Diana, in regard of some black and envious slanders hourly breathed against her, for her divine justice on Acteon, as she pretends, hath here, in the vale of Gargaphie, proclaim'd a solemn revels, which she will descend to grace, with the full and royal expense of one of her clearest moons: in which time it shall be lawful for all sorts of ingenious persons to visit her palace, to court her nymphs, to exercise all variety of generous and noble pastimes; as well as to intimate how far she treads such malicious imputations beneath her, as also to show how clear her beauties are from the least wrinkle of austerity they may be charged with.”

Mercury then awakens Echo, who bewails the beautiful Narcissus, and, standing over the fountain, “whose springs

weep yet the untimely fate of that too beauteous boy," he exclaims:

Henceforth, thou treacherous and murdering spring,
 Be ever called the Fountain of Self-love:
 And with thy water let this curse remain,
 As an inseparate plague, that who but taste
 A drop thereof, may, with the instant touch,
 Grow dotingly enamor'd on themselves.

The courtiers, Asotus, Crites, and others, enter and drink, and each falls in love with himself. Asotus, desiring to become an adept in the manners of the court, takes lessons of Amorphus, a traveler, who instructs him in regard to courtiers' faces and language, and teaches him learned oaths and fashionable metaphors. After this a tournament is held before the ladies; it comprises four jousts with "the choice and most cunning weapons of court-compliment; viz., the Bare Accost, the Better Regard, the Solemn Address, and the Perfect Close." The prizes are, for the first joust with the "Bare Accost, two wall-eyes in a face forced; for the Better Regard, a face favorably simpering, with a fan waving; for the Solemn Address, two lips wagging and never a wise word; for the Perfect Close, a wring by the hand, with a banquet in the corner." In this tournament the courtiers are beaten, and Crites rebukes them thus:

O vanity,
 How are thy painted beauties doted on
 By light and empty idiots! how pursued
 With open and extended appetite!
 How they do sweat, and run themselves from breath,
 Rais'd on their toes, to catch thy airy forms,
 Still turning giddy, till they reel like drunkards,
 That buy the merry madness of one hour,
 With the long irksomeness of following time!

The play closes with the representation of two symbolical masques, and the discovery that the vices have disguised

themselves as virtues, for which act Cynthia, through Crites, passes this sentence upon them :

From this place
You, two and two, singing a Palinode,
March to your several homes by Niobe's stone,
And offer up two tears apiece thereon,
That it may change the name, as you must change,
And of a stone be called Weeping-cross. . . .
And after penance thus perform'd you pass
In like set order, not as Midas did,
To wash his gold off into Tagus' stream ;
But to the well of knowledge, Helicon ;
Where, purged of your present maladies,
Which are not few nor slender, you become
Such as you fain would seem, and then return,
Offering your service to great Cynthia.

In the last year of Elizabeth's reign Ben Jonson produced his first tragedy, entitled *Sejanus: his Fall*. If the student will compare this piece with *Coriolanus*, he will readily see what a vast distance there is between our two greatest dramatists. Between 1605 and 1610 he produced three of his best comedies, *Volpone the Fox* ; *The Silent Woman* ; and *The Alchemist*. The first-named is the finest thing he has written, excelling both in its power of delineation and in the development of the plot. M. Taine describes it as a "sublime work, the sharpest picture of the manners of the age, in which is displayed the full brightness of evil lusts, in which lewdness, cruelty, love of gold, shamelessness of vice, display a sinister yet splendid poetry, worthy of one of Titian's bacchanals." In 1611 Jonson published his second and last tragedy, *Catiline*. The numerous other dramas written by this great poet we shall not mention by name, as they would be of no interest to the general reader, and even to the special student they would prove scarcely worthy of more than a mere passing notice. But, however dry and unattractive his more pretentious works

may seem, he was capable of writing the purest, most graceful poetry. He wrote a great number of *Masques*, of which, indeed, he is said to have been the inventor. Masques were a kind of poetic masquerades, ballets, and choruses, written especially for some festive occasion, and in honor of the distinguished persons present. The characters represented were, for the most part, allegorical; "all worlds, the actual, the abstract, the divine, the human, the ancient, the modern, were brought on the stage to furnish costumes, harmonious groups, emblems, songs, whatever could excite, intoxicate, the artistic sense." Great men took part in them; nobles and the *élite* of the kingdom were the actors. The magnificence and variety sometimes displayed in the scenery of these little pieces was remarkable, forming a striking contrast to the barrenness of the stage in the theatres. For example, read his directions for *The Masque of Beauty*:

"Here a curtain was drawn in which the Night was painted, and the scene discovered, which I devised should be an island floating in calm water. In the midst thereof was a seat of state, called the Throne of Beauty, erected, divided into eight squares, and distinguished by so many Ionic pilasters. In these squares the sixteen masquers were placed by couples; behind them, in the centre of the throne, was a translucent pillar, shining with several colored lights that reflected on their backs. From the top of which pillar went several arches to the pilasters that sustained the roof of the throne, which was likewise adorned with lights and garlands: and between the pilasters in front, little Cupids in flying posture, waving of wreaths and lights, bore up the cornice: over which were placed eight figures, representing the elements of Beauty, which advanced upon the Ionic, and, being females, had the Corinthian order." Here he describes the gorgeous dresses and jewels of these eight figures and of the masquers. "The throne whereon they sat seemed to be a mine of lights struck from their jewels and their garments. This

throne, as the whole island moved forward on the water, had a circular motion of its own, imitating what we call *motum mundi*, from the east to the west. . . . The steps whereon the Cupids sat had a motion contrary, with analogy *ad motum planetarum*, from the west to the east: both which turned with their several lights. And with these three varied motions at once, the whole scene shot itself to the land. Above which the moon was seen in a silver chariot, drawn by virgins, to ride in the clouds and hold them greater light, with the sign Scorpio and the character placed before her."* As might be supposed, the dialogue in these pieces was very slight. The masque depended for its success upon the beauty of its scenery and the music of its lyrical parts. Jonson continued to write them, year after year, almost to the end of his life, and they remained popular up to the time of the Puritan domination. We shall even find the poet Milton attempting the composition of one in his masque of *Comus*. The theatres, borrowing a hint from the beauties of these delightful representations, soon introduced their scenic decorations upon the stage.

One of the last, and by all odds the most beautiful of Jonson's dramas, is his unfinished pastoral comedy of *The Sad Shepherd*. It was written while in the sick-chamber, and with a keen sense and remembrance of the bitter disappointments which had been his in life:

He that hath feasted you these forty years,
And fitted fables for your finer ears,
Although at first he scarce could hit the bore;
Yet you, with patience, hearkening more and more,
At length have grown up to him, and made known
The working of his pen is now your own:
He prays you would vouchsafe, for your own sake,
To hear him this once more, but sit awake.
And though he now present you with such wool

* *The Works of Ben Jonson*. Edited by Gifford, p. 549.

As from mere English flocks his muse can pull,
 He hopes when it is made up into cloth,
 Not the most curious head here will be loth
 To wear a hood of it, it being a fleece,
 To match or those of Sicily or Greece.
 His scene is Sherwood, and his play a tale
 Of Robin Hood's inviting from the vale
 Of Belvoir, all the shepherds to a feast;
 Where, by the casual absence of one guest,
 The mirth is troubled much, and in one man
 As much of sadness shown as passion can.

Taine says of Ben Jonson: "He had cumbered himself with science, clogged himself with theories, constituted himself theatrical critic and social censor, filled his soul with unrelenting indignation, fostered a combative and morose disposition; but divine dreams never left him. He is the brother of Shakspeare."

Hazlitt's contrast between Shakspeare and Ben Jonson will be of interest to the reader who has not the leisure to evolve these facts from his own study:

"Shakspeare gives play to nature and his own genius, while Jonson trusts almost entirely to imitation and custom. Shakspeare takes his groundwork in individual character and the manners of his age, and raises from them a fantastical and delightful superstructure of his own; Jonson takes the same ground in matter of fact, but hardly ever rises above it. . . . Ben Jonson is a great borrower from the works of others, and a plagiarist even from Nature; so little freedom is there in his imitations of her, and he appears to receive her bounty like an alms. . . . Shakspeare, even when he takes whole passages from books, does it with a spirit, felicity, and mastery over his subject that instantly make them his own. Jonson's style is as dry, as literal, and as meagre as Shakspeare's is exuberant, liberal, and unrestrained. The one labors hard, lashes himself up, and produces little pleasure with all his fidelity and tenaciousness of purpose; the other, without

putting himself to any trouble, or thinking about his success, performs wonders. . . . Shakspeare's characters are men; Ben Jonson's are more like machines, governed by mere routine, or by the convenience of the poet, whose property they are. . . . The comedy of this author is far from being 'lively, audible, and full of vent;' it is for the most part obtuse, obscure, forced, and tedious."

Of the minor contemporaries and successors of Shakspeare and Ben Jonson but little need be said here. A study of their genius and their works is of value and interest in tracing the decline of the drama from the glorious height to which it had been raised by Marlowe, Shakspeare, and Jonson.

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher were the authors of a large number of dramas, of which fourteen were written conjointly. Their finest tragedies are *Philaster*; or, *Love Lies a-Bleeding* (1610), and *The Maid's Tragedy* (1619). *The False One*, by Fletcher (1625), is an imitation of *Antony and Cleopatra*, and in some passages rises almost equal in style and manner to some of Shakspeare's happiest productions. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1615), written by Fletcher alone, is a dramatization of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, although in the portraiture of Emily,—now the gaoler's daughter,—of her love and madness, there is an evident imitation of the character of Ophelia in *Hamlet*. There is a tradition that this play owes its first act and the conception of its plan to Shakspeare. Fletcher's pastoral drama, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, is characterized as abounding in tender pathos and delicate sentiment, happily blended with pleasing descriptions of nature and with the harmonies of music. It was written in imitation of Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido*, and is thought to have suggested and inspired both the *Sad Shepherd* of Ben Jonson and the *Comus* of John Milton. Says Hallam: "It is a play very characteristic of Fletcher, being a mixture of tenderness, purity, indecency, and absurdity."

Philip Massinger takes high rank among the dramatists of the earlier years of the seventeenth century. Hallam regards him as next to Shakspeare in tragic power, and not inferior to Jonson in the higher comedy, but in wit and sprightly dialogue far below Fletcher. No writer is fouler in language, and yet he is the most moral of all the dramatists of his time. No writer has excelled him in delineating female purity and devotion, the sublime grief of the nobly unfortunate, and the dignity of an unselfish devotion to principle. And we can account for the odious indecency and coarseness which pervade his comic scenes only upon the supposition that they were written by another hand. We know that some of them are the work of Dekker. Massinger's best tragedies are *The Fatal Dowry* and *The Duke of Milan*. His comedy, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, is still popular upon the stage, and the name of its leading character, Sir Giles Overreach, has become the synonym for the miserly extortioner of our own day.

The dramas of John Ford are distinguished for the wonderful power exhibited by their author in delineating unhappy love. There is no comic humor in his tragedies, but the pathos and the tender feeling which characterize his plays are unequalled. His greatest works are *The Broken Heart* (1633), and a stirring historical drama relating to the times and the pretensions of *Perkin Warbeck* (1634). *Love's Sacrifice* (1633) is manifestly an imitation of Shakspeare's *Othello*. Swinburne writes thus of Ford: "No poet is less forgettable than he; none fastens, as it were, the fangs of his genius and his will more deeply in your memory. . . . His force is never the force of accident. . . . He knows what he would have and what he would do, and gains his end and does his work with full conscience of purpose and insistence of design. . . . In that gallery of monumental men and mighty memories, among or above the fellows of his godlike craft, the high figure of Ford stands steadily erect; his name is ineffaceable from the scroll of our great writers; it is one of the loftier landmarks of English poetry."

John Webster excelled in the delineation of strange and fantastic horrors. He was pre-eminently the dramatist of Death. But his works abound in passages of surprising tenderness and beauty. The vices and crimes which he delighted to paint have, notwithstanding their extravagance, an appearance of terrible reality; and he had the wonderful faculty of surmising and looking into the inmost thoughts and springs of action in the human mind. He was an artist of the highest type. His greatest work is the tragedy of *The Duchess of Malfy* (1623). Of this work Hazlitt says: "The horror is accumulated to an overpowering and insupportable height. The scenes of the madhouse, and the interview between the duchess and her brother, exceed, to my thinking, the bounds of poetry and tragedy." Charles Lamb says: "To move a horror skillfully, to touch a soul to the quick, to lay upon fear as much as it can bear, to wean and weary a life till it is ready to drop, and then step in with mortal instruments to take its last forfeit: this only a Webster can do. Inferior geniuses may 'upon horror's head horrors accumulate,' but they cannot do this."

The student, while making acquaintance with the literature of this remarkable period, will encounter the names of a host of minor dramatists, each one of whom has his peculiar traits and, without doubt, no inconsiderable merit. There was George Chapman, more famous for his inimitable translation of Homer; Thomas Dekker, the collaborator and assistant of so many abler dramatists; John Marston, who made his dramas the vehicle of lofty satire upon the follies of mankind; Broome, the domestic servant of Ben Jonson, but afterwards a noted actor and successful author; Thomas Heywood, who had "either an entire hand or at least a main finger in two hundred and twenty dramas;" and, finally, James Shirley, the last of the Elizabethan dramatists, the connecting link, as it were, between the great school of Shakspeare and the totally different drama of the Restoration.

As the Puritan influence in England increased, the popularity of the drama and of theatrical performances gradually diminished. The masque, that species of entertainment which had been brought to such perfection by Ben Jonson, would probably have disappeared entirely had it not been for a too hasty aggressive movement from extreme Puritan sources. One William Prynne, in 1633, published a tract, entitled *Histrio-Mastix: the Player's Scourge or Actor's Tragedie*, in which he attacked with more bitterness than judgment every species of dramatic entertainment. The work so offended King Charles and his court that the writer was arrested and brought before the Star Chamber. He was sentenced to pay a fine of £5000; to stand twice in the pillory, and to lose his ears; to have his book burned by the common hangman; to be expelled from the Society of Lincoln's Inn, and from the University of Oxford; and to be imprisoned for life. Prynne's ill-advised and unfortunate assault occasioned a short-lived reaction in favor of the drama; and courtly pageants and masques became once more fashionable. It was during this spasmodic revival that John Milton wrote his *Comus*, and he who was afterwards regarded as the greatest of Puritan poets, appeared as the author of the last cavalier masque.

Comus was written for Sir John Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater and Lord-President of Wales, and was acted at his residence at Ludlow Castle on Michaelmas night, 1634. The music which accompanied its representation was composed by Henry Lawes, and the actors were the members of the earl's family. As to the original conception of the play, Milton doubtless received some suggestions from Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*, which had but lately been "acted divers time with great applause" at the Blackfriars theatre. He had doubtless also seen a certain Latin prose satire entitled *Comus*, written by a Dutchman, Hendrick Van der Putte, and about that time reprinted at Oxford. He may have derived further suggestions from Peele's *Old*

Wives' Tale, from Ben Jonson's masque of *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, and from Homer's *Odyssey*. The word Comus is derived from the Greek personification of disorderly animal pleasure. Thus Cassandra, in the Greek tragedy of *Agamemnon*, is made to say, "The horrid band who sing of evil things will never forsake this house. Behold Comus, the drinker of human blood, fired with new rage, still remains within the house, sent forward by the Furies, his kinsmen." Comus was sometimes represented as a divinity sitting with crossed legs, his stomach inflated, his head drooping, and his countenance the very picture of sensuality. In his hand he held a torch—the torch of reason—inverted.

The name *Comus* was not given to Milton's masque until after his death. Its original title was merely "A Masque presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634, before the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord-President of Wales." The plot is very simple, the interest of the performance depending mainly upon the scenery and the music. The first scene discovers a wild wood and the Attendant Spirit, who sings:

Before the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live insphered
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
Which men call earth, and, with low-thoughted care
Confined, and pester'd in this pinfold here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants,
Amongst the enthron'd gods on sainted seats.

Then he announces the subject of the masque and the special occasion of its representation, and tells how a noble lady, separated from her brothers, strays

Through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger.

Then enters Comus, the son of Circe, with a charming-rod in one hand, a glass in the other, and, following him, "a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistening; they come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands." The lady, attracted by the noise, enters; for, although she recognizes the sound of riot and disorderly merriment, and is loth

To meet the rudeness and swill'd innocence
Of such late wassailers,

She asks herself

Where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?

Comus and his crew vanish, while she soliloquizes:

O welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemish'd form of Chastity;
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That he, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistening guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honor unassail'd.
Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err; there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.

To attract the attention of her brothers, "who perhaps are not far off," she sings; then Comus, disguised as a shepherd, enters and says:

Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,

And with these raptures moves the vocal air
 To testify his hidden residence :
 How sweetly did they float upon the wings
 Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
 At every fall smoothing the raven down
 Of darkness, till it smiled ! I have oft heard
 My mother Circe with the Sireus three,
 Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades
 Culling their potent herbs, and baleful drugs,
 Who as they sung would take the prison'd soul,
 And lap it in Elysium ; Scylla wept,
 And chid her barking waves into attention,
 And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause ;
 Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,
 And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself,
 But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
 Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
 I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
 And she shall be my queen.

Then by deceit he lures the noble lady to his palace,
 where he seats her, with "nerves all chained up," in his
 enchanted chair, at a table spread with all manner of
 dainties. But, strengthened by "pure-eyed Faith and
 white-handed Hope," she resists his temptations :

Impostor, do not charge most innocent Nature,
 As if she would her children should be riotous
 With her abundance ; she, good cateress,
 Means her provision only to the good,
 That live according to her sober laws,
 And holy dictate of spare temperance.

* * * * *

Hence with thy brew'd enchantments, foul deceiver !
 Hast thou betray'd my credulous innocence
 With visor'd falsehood, and base forgery ?
 And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here
 With liquorish baits fit to ensnare a brute ?
 Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,

I would not taste thy treasonous offer ; none
But such as are good men can give good thiugs,
And that which is not good, is not delicious
To a well-govern'd and wise appetite.

Comus is in the act of presenting her a cup of wine, when the brothers, led by the Attendant Spirit, rush in with drawn swords, wrest the glass out of his hand and dash it upon the ground. He, with his company, escapes, carrying his magic wand with him. To release the lady from the enchanted chair, the brothers call upon Sabrina, the benevolent naiad who haunts the river Severn :

Sabrina, fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
In twisted braid of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair ;
Listen for dear honor's sake,
Goddess of the silver lake,
Listen and save.

Sabrina, attended by water-nymphs, rises from her "coral-paven bed," and stays her sliding chariot,

By the rushy fringed bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier dank.

She sprinkles the lady with drops from her fountain pure,

Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip.
Next this marbled venom'd seat,
Smear'd with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold :
Now the spell hath lost his hold ;
And I must haste ere morning hour
To wait in Amphitrite's bower.

The lady rises out of her "venom'd seat," and the company "fly this cursed place." The scene changes to Ludlow Castle, and the Attendant Spirit pronounces the epilogue.

Lord Macaulay says: "*Comus* is certainly the noblest performance of the kind which exists in any language. The speeches must be read as majestic soliloquies, and he who reads them will be enraptured with their eloquence, their sublimity, and their music. But the finest passages are those which are lyric in form as well as in spirit. 'I should much commend,' says Sir Henry Wotton, 'the tragical part if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Dorique delicacy in your songs and odes, whereunto I have seen yet nothing parallel in our language.'"

Stopford Brooke says: "That *Comus* soars beyond the occasion is plain enough. It displaced itself as a masque to rise into a poem to the glory and victory of virtue. And its virtue lies in the mastery of the righteous will over sense and appetite. It is a song to temperance as the ground of freedom, to temperance as the guard of all the virtues, to beauty as secured by temperance, and its central point and climax is in the pleading of these motives by the lady against their opposites in the mouth of the lord of sensual revel."

Notwithstanding the temporary reaction in favor of dramatic representations, the Puritan power and influence steadily increased. The days soon came when "the ears of Prynne were avenged." On the 2d of September, 1642, by order of the two houses of Parliament, the theatres were closed, "as a becoming measure during the season of public calamity and impending civil war." In January, 1648, another ordinance was passed forbidding all theatrical entertainments, and directing the theatres to be rendered unserviceable.

The Puritans, in their zealous determination to force all classes of people to become devout, declared that the acting of theatrical plays should be considered a crime and punished as such, and, more than this, that even the witnessing

of such plays was a misdemeanor. Dramatic representations were thus entirely proscribed until the year 1656; nor, indeed, were they restored to favor until the accession of Charles II., in 1660. During this period of Puritan domination, of course no new plays were written; and when, at length, the nation threw off the irksome restraints which fanaticism had imposed, the drama which had so delighted and amused the preceding generation was found to be too staid and too intellectual for the entertainment of the wits of King Charles's court, and of the now thoroughly corrupted society of the London aristocracy. The character of the drama, therefore, necessarily underwent a radical change in order to accommodate itself to the character of its patrons. The new drama became, in consequence, not only an institution specially designed for the amusement of the public, but also the mouth-piece of the triumphant enemies of Puritanism. The comic dramatist, who catered to the taste of an anti-Puritan public, knew well the road to popular favor. "The Puritan had affected formality; the comic poet laughed at decorum. The Puritan had frowned at innocent diversions; the comic poet took under his patronage the most flagitious excesses. The Puritan had canted; the comic poet blasphemed. The Puritan had made an affair of gallantry felony without benefit of clergy; the comic poet represented it as an honorable distinction. The Puritan spoke with disdain of the low standard of popular morality; his life was regulated by a far more rigid code; his virtue was sustained by motives unknown to men of the world. . . . The fashionable circles and the comic poets took up the notion that all professions of piety and integrity were to be construed by the rule of contrary; that it might well be doubted whether there was such a thing as virtue in the world; but that, at all events, a person who affected to be better than his neighbors was sure to be a knave."*

* Macaulay: *Comic Dramatists of the Restoration.*

It was under such circumstances and influences that the new drama attained its full development. It differed from the Elizabethan drama, which it succeeded, not only in its moral tone, but in its literary form also. The latter it borrowed from the French; for French manners and tastes were as popular at court as was the disregard of all moral propriety. The distinction between tragedy and comedy was more clearly marked than before. All tragedy was bombastic, stilted, declamatory; all comedy had relation not to nature, but to society; not to character, but to manners. The dramatic compositions of this period, while exhibiting much brilliant wit and an admirable command of language, were, on the whole, of an extremely frivolous and artificial character. With but few exceptions, these works are now unknown to the general reader, their coarseness and excessive profligacy rendering them unattractive and uninteresting.

The earliest writers of this artificial and corrupt drama were John Dryden, Sir William Davenant, Killigrew, and Shadwell. Dryden's first comedy, *The Wild Gallant*, appeared in 1662. For some years afterward he devoted himself entirely to dramatic composition, contracting with the King's Company of Players to supply them regularly with three plays a year. Of the twenty-seven dramas thus produced, it is unnecessary even to mention the names. They are marked by all the profligacy and indecency so fashionable at the time of their composition, and are almost wholly devoid of either humor or tenderness. In his comedies, Dryden endeavors to secure variety and enlist the attention by the insertion of innumerable intrigues, by the narration of wonderful escapes, of unexpected disclosures, and of puzzling plots and concealments. But he is utterly unable to represent with faithfulness either man or nature. His characters are very monsters of coarseness and immorality; and there is a painful stiffness and conventionality in all of his scenes. His tragedies are written in the exaggerated, bombastic style popular at that time.

"Everything, even the most abstract qualities of mind, are represented on the most colossal scale of strained magnificence." Although he professed to ignore the French influence, he was led by the example of Corneille to abandon blank verse and to adopt the use of rhyme in dramatic composition, "fancying," says Taine, "that he was thus inventing a new species, which he calls heroic play. But in this transformation the good perished, the bad remains. For rhyme differs in different races. To an Englishman it resembles a song, and transports him at once to an ideal and fairy world. To a Frenchman it is only a conventionalism or an expediency, and transports him at once to an ante-chamber or a drawing-room; to him it is an ornamental dress and nothing more; if it mars prose, it ennobles it; it imposes respect, not enthusiasm, and changes a vulgar into a high-bred style. . . . But Dryden's rhymes, to an Englishman's ear, scatter at once the whole illusion of the stage; they see that the characters who speak thus are but squeaking puppets; he himself admits that his heroic tragedy is only fit to represent on the stage chivalric poems like those of Ariosto or Spenser." Rhyming tragedies did not prove to be successful, even in that age of perverted tastes, and after having been thoroughly ridiculed by the Duke of Buckingham in *The Rehearsal*, Dryden was glad to return to the unrhymed blank verse. The tragedy called *Tyrannic Love; or, the Royal Martyr*, published in 1669, may be taken as a good example of his rhymed plays. It is the story of the martyrdom of St. Catherine by the tyrant Maximin. The following quotation will serve to illustrate the pompous nonsense which abounds in this and the similar dramatic compositions of Dryden. Porphyrius, the captain of the Praetorian bands, having been detected in a love intrigue with Berenice, Maximin's wife, the tyrant thus addresses him:

The sight with which my eyes shall first be fed
Must be my Empress and this Traitor's head.

But Porphyrius defiantly answers :

Where'er thou stand'st, I'll level at that place
My gushing blood, and spout it at thy face,
Thus, not by Marriage, we our Blood will join :
Nay, more, my Arms shall throw my Head at thine.

Dr. Johnson says of this tragedy : " It is conspicuous for some passages of strength and elegance, and for many of empty noise and ridiculous turbulence." The same criticism would aptly apply to many other tragedies by the same author.

Dryden attempted to reconstruct and improve Shakspeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* in a drama which he called *All for Love; or, the World Well Lost*. He also "modernized" the *Tempest*, and essayed to turn Milton's *Paradise Lost* into an operatic drama, entitled *The State of Innocence*. The latter was written in ten-syllabled rhyming verse, and is characterized by the usual amount of bombast and affectation. The last rhymed tragedy written by Dryden was the play called *Aurenge Zebe; or, the Great Mogul*, which appeared in 1675. He was at this time contemplating the composition of a great poem, and he was heartily tired of his experiment with dramatic rhyme. "I desire to be no longer the Sisyphus of the stage," he said : "to rowl up a stone with endless labour (which, to follow the proverb, gathers no moss), and which is perpetually falling down again ; I never thought myself very fit for an employment where many of my predecessors have excell'd me in all kinds ; and some of my contemporaries, even in my own partial judgment, have outdone me in comedy. . . . As I am no successor to Homer in his wit, so neither do I desire to be in his poverty. I can make no rhapsodies, nor go a-begging at the Grecian doors, while I sing the praises of their ancestors. The times of Virgil please me better, because he had an Augustus for his patron. And to draw the allegory nearer you (Lord Mulgrave), I am sure I shall not want a Mæcenas with him. 'Tis for your

lordship to stir up that remembrance in His Majesty, which his many avocations of business have caus'd him, I fear, to lay aside."*

Among Dryden's other dramas we need but mention *The Indian Emperor*, a story of the conquest of Mexico by Cortez; *The Spanish Friar*; and *The Conquest of Granada*. These, with those previously noticed, are his best. The others may well be forgotten. Hallam says: "Dryden has no great abundance of wit. His jests are practical, and he seems to have written more for the eye than the ear. It may be noted, as a proof of this, that his stage directions are unusually full. In point of diction, the *Spanish Friar*, in its tragic scenes, and *All for Love*, are certainly the best plays of Dryden. They are the least infected with his great fault, bombast, and should, indeed, be read over and over by those who would learn the true tone of English tragedy. In dignity, in animation, in striking images and figures, there are few or none that excel them; the power, indeed, of impressing sympathy or commanding tears was seldom placed by nature within the reach of Dryden."

William Davenant had written several plays before the time of the Puritan domination and the suppression of the theatres. In 1629 he had produced a tragedy, *Albovine, King of the Lombards*; and in 1630 *The Cruel Brother* and *The Just Italian*. In 1634, the same year which saw the performance of Milton's *Comus*, he had written a masque, to be acted at Whitehall by the queen and her ladies, called *The Temple of Love*. Upon the death of Ben Jonson he was appointed poet laureate; but when the Puritans came into power he was forced to flee into exile. While in Paris he wrote the poem *Gondibert*, which will be noticed in the next chapter. After the Restoration, he wrote three plays,—fair samples of the dramatic performances of that time,—*The Siege of Rhodes*; *The Rivals*; and *The Man's a Master*. The last of these was published in 1668. He

* Dedication of *Aurenge Zebe* to Lord Mulgrave.

also assisted Dryden in transforming Shakspeare's *Tempest* into a gaudy, bombastic opera.

The Rehearsal, to which we have already made brief allusion, was produced in 1671, being the work of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. It is chiefly remembered for the manner in which it casts ridicule upon Dryden's rhymed plays. "It is in great measure," says Hazlitt, "taken from Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, which was written in ridicule of the London apprentices who, in the reign of Elizabeth, had a great hand in the critical decisions of that age." "It was really," says Morley, "a plea for good sense against showy nonsense; merry, and free from the indecency then common in dramatic jests."

In the same year, in grand contrast to the stilted tragedies and indecent comedies then in vogue, appeared the last work of John Milton, a tragedy entitled *Samson Agonistes*. It is a sacred drama modeled strictly after the works of the Greek tragedians. It is the story of the death of Samson, derived from the account given in the Old Testament. But there is probably also an allegorical meaning hidden within the play. The Puritan party, once so powerful in England, is typified as Samson, now grown old, blind, and powerless. The king and his court are the Philistines who have bound the once strong man to the pillars of the palace, and make sport of his infirmities. Lowell says: "The *Samson Agonistes* is not only the most successful attempt at reproducing the Greek tragedy, but it is also the most masterly piece of English versification. Goethe admits that it alone, among modern works, has caught life from the breath of the antique spirit. But he failed to see, or at least to give, the reason for it. Milton not only subjected himself to the structural requirements of the Attic tragedy, but with a true poetic instinct availed himself of the striking advantage it had in the choice of a subject. No popular tradition lay near enough to him for his purpose; none united in itself the

essential requisites of human interest and universal belief. He accordingly chose a Jewish mythus, very near to his own heart as a blind prisoner, betrayed by his wife, among the Philistines of the Restoration, and familiar to the earliest associations of his hearers. This subject, and this alone, met all the demands both of living poetic production and of antique form,—the action grandly simple, the personages few, the protagonist at once a victim of divine judgment and an executor of divine retribution, an intense personal sympathy in the poet himself, and no strangeness to the habitual prepossessions of those he addressed to be overcome before he could touch their hearts or be sure of aid from their imaginations."

Stopford Brooke says: "*Samson Agonistes* has more than a personal or a party interest. Its literary position is unique. Written in blank verse, in the old English spirit, in the old classic manner, it is a stranger among the dramas of the Restoration, which were written in rhyme in the new French spirit, in a form which wore the garments but had not the heart of the classic plays. On the other hand, written in 1671, it is an unexpected resurrection of that great Elizabethan drama which began its mighty youth in *Tamburlaine*, and had died before the Restoration. It is divided from both dramas by its religion, its ideal morality, and its republicanism—in one word—by its Puritanism. . . . In its relation, alike to the drama that preceded and surrounded it, it resembles one of those fortress-rocks which, the expiring effort of the Alpine chain, stands apart in the plain of Lombardy, and frowns upon a world in which it is a stranger. Like it, too, Milton and his work remain apart in lonely grandeur. In one respect, he had no predecessor and no follower. And we who attempt, at so vast a distance, to look up to the height on which he sits with Homer and Dante, feel we may paint the life, but hardly dare to analyze the work of the great Singer and Maker whose name shines only less brightly than Shakspeare's on the long and splendid roll of the poets of England."

Descending again to the level of the drama of the Restoration, we will glance very briefly at the comedy which flourished and was fashionable during the latter half of the seventeenth century. The most noted writers of comedy were William Wycherley, William Congreve, John Vanbrugh, and George Farquhar. Each of these was distinguished by certain traits and peculiar talents of his own; but of their works it is scarcely necessary to say more than that they are all marked by the prevailing vulgarity and immorality of the times. Wycherley excelled in character-painting and in broad humor; Congreve in polished wit and elegant descriptions; Vanbrugh in purely comic invention and ludicrous narration; Farquhar in gayety and sprightly incident. Wycherley's greatest and most successful piece was *The Country Wife*, published in 1675; that of Congreve was *Love for Love* (1695); that of Vanbrugh, *The Provoked Wife* (1697); that of Farquhar, *The Beaux's Stratagem* (1707). The general character and tone of the writings of these men is thus described by M. Taine:

"The English comedy-writers paint the vices and possess them. Their talent and their stage are tainted by them. Art and philosophy are absent. The authors do not advance upon a general idea, and they do not proceed by the most direct method. They put together ill, and are embarrassed by materials. Their pieces have generally two intermingled plots, manifestly distinct, combined in order to multiply incidents and because the public demands a multitude of characters and facts. A strong current of boisterous action is necessary to stir up their dense appreciation. . . . The scenes are ill connected; they change twenty times from place to place. When one scene begins to develop itself, a deluge of incidents interrupts. An irrelevant dialogue drags on between the incidents, suggesting a book with the notes introduced promiscuously into the text. There is no plan carefully conceived and rigorously carried out; they took, as it were, a plan, and wrote out the

scenes one after another, pretty much as they came into their head. Probability is not well cared for. There are poorly arranged disguises, ill simulated folly, mock marriages, and attacks by robbers worthy of the comic opera. . . . Congreve, Farquhar, Vanbrugh, are only men of wit, not thinkers. They skim the surface of things, but do not penetrate. They play with their characters. They aim at success, at amusement. They sketch caricatures; they spin out in lively fashion a vain and bantering conversation; they make answers clash with one another, fling forth paradoxes; their nimble fingers manipulate and juggle with the incidents in a hundred ingenious and unlooked-for ways. They have animation, they abound in gesture and repartee; the constant bustle of the stage and its lively spirit surround them with continual excitement. But the pleasure is only skin deep; we have seen nothing of the eternal foundation and the real nature of mankind; we carry no thought away; we have passed an hour, and that is all; the amusement teaches us nothing, and serves only to fill up the evenings of coquettes and coxcombs."

Two tragedies, by Thomas Otway—*The Orphan* (1680), and *Venice Preserved* (1682)—show a decided superiority over the stilted productions of Dryden. Both of these possess genuine merit and are still popular. Of the former, Dr. Johnson remarks: "This is one of the few pieces that has pleased for almost a century through all the vicissitudes of dramatic fashion. Of this play nothing new can easily be said. It is a domestic tragedy drawn from middle life; its whole power is upon the affections; for it is not written with much comprehension of thought or elegance of expression. But if the heart is interested, many other beauties may be wanting yet not missed." The tragedy of *Venice Preserved* is founded upon an incident in the Abbé de St. Réal's history of the Spanish conspiracy at Venice. As at first written, it contained several scenes of vile comedy intermixed with the tragic action; but these having been removed, the play is now one of con-

siderable interest and power. It has been more frequently represented than any other tragedy except those of Shakspeare; and, aside from the improbability of its action, it contains many fine touches of passion and dramatic eloquence.

The tragedies of Nicholas Rowe are noted for their tenderness of feeling—a quality not very common in the dramatic productions of that period. *The Fair Penitent*, produced in 1703, is founded on Massinger's *Fatal Dowry*. It is a domestic story, and Richardson, the novelist, is supposed to have received from Lothario, one of the personages of the play, suggestions for the character of Lovelace in his romance of *Clarissa Harlowe*. Two other tragedies of Rowe are *Jane Shore*, produced in 1714, and *Lady Jane Grey* (1715). These are manifestly attempts at imitating the great historical plays of Shakspeare. They are remarkable for the elegance of their diction and the melodious flow of their versification. But they are deficient both in the delineation of strong passion and in characterization.

Thomas Southern is remembered for his pathetic drama of *Oroonoko*, written in 1720. This play is founded upon a romance written by Mrs. Aphra Behn in 1698, entitled *Oroonoko; or, the Royal Slave*. The main circumstances of the story are said to have actually occurred during the reign of Charles II., at Surinam, where "an African prince, entrapped by the mild subjects of a Christian king and a Christian government, was brought and sold to slavery." Southern deserves the praise of being the first English writer to denounce the cruelties of slavery and the slave-trade.

Three noted prose works on the drama, written towards the latter part of the seventeenth century, are here deserving of notice, from the fact that they exerted some influence in determining the subsequent character of the stage. The first of these was Dryden's *Essay on Dramatic Poesy*, published in 1668, and reprinted in 1684. It was in this essay that Dryden argued the correctness of his peculiar notions

regarding rhymed tragedy. It is written in the form of a dialogue, Dryden himself being one of the speakers. Sir Robert Howard, having written some very civil criticisms upon the views advanced in this essay, Dryden, in a tone of assumed superiority and cutting scorn, made reply in a second essay upon the same subject. But, as we have seen, he afterwards became convinced at least of the unpopularity of rhyming tragedy, and abandoned its use.

In 1678, Thomas Rymer published a work entitled *The Tragedies of the Last Age considered and examined by the Practice of the Ancients and by the Common Sense of all Ages*.

The plays criticised were Shakspeare's *Othello* and *Julius Cæsar*; Ben Jonson's *Catiline*; and Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy*; *Rollo*; and *King and no King*. "I have chiefly considered," says he, "the fable or plot which all conclude to be the soul of tragedy, which, with the ancients, is always found to be a reasonable soul, but with us, for the most part, a brutish, and often worse than brutish." And again: "I have thought our poetry of the last age as rude as our architecture; one cause thereof might be that Aristotle's treatise of poetry has been so little studied among us."

It will be observed that, about the close of the seventeenth century, a marked improvement began to take place in the tone and character of the productions prepared for theatrical representation. This was owing partly to a healthy change in popular morals; but it was brought about chiefly through the influence of Jeremy Collier, an ardent non-juring clergyman and controversialist. In 1698, Collier published a pamphlet, entitled *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the Stage; together with the Sense of Antiquity upon the Argument*. In this pamphlet he so ably combated the glaring evil, that the wits were worsted, and popular opinion began to favor a reform. The work having been brought to the notice of the king, a royal order was issued with a view towards restraining the abuses of the stage. The Master of the Revels, an

officer whose duty it was to license plays, was urged to exercise greater severity in the performance of his duty, and the reformation of the drama was fully inaugurated. But the improvement, although marked, was slow in its progress. Indecency and vulgarity continued to be the chief characteristic of comedy. Dean Swift, writing in 1709, declared that the degraded condition of the drama was one of the main causes of the corruption of the age.

It is remarkable that while the writers of English comedy had borrowed largely from the French, the English stage, for the first fifty years succeeding the Restoration, far surpassed the French in indecorum and immorality. Indeed, it appears as if English writers, in order to show their contempt for the dramatic supremacy of France, sometimes adapted French comedies to English tastes by presenting them with large additions of coarseness and obscenity. During this period the greatest plays of the Elizabethan dramatists were deemed too tame for English audiences, and were either banished entirely from the stage, or altered and rewritten so as to conform to the standard of "correctness" then fashionable. We have already spoken of Dryden's "modernization" of the *Tempest*, and of *Antony and Cleopatra*. *Romeo and Juliet* had given place to the tragedy of *Caius Marius*, by Otway; *Measure for Measure*, to *The Law Against Lovers*, by Davenant; *The Merchant of Venice*, to *The Jew of Venice*, by Lord Lansdowne; *Cymbeline*, to *The Injured Princess*, by Durfey; *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, to *The Comical Gallant*, by John Dennis; *Richard II.*, to *The Sicilian Tyrant*, by Tate.

The first comedy after the Restoration which lays any claims to morality is *The Conscious Lovers*, written by Sir Richard Steele, in 1722. Hazlitt says: "The comedies of Steele were the first that were written expressly with a view not to imitate the manners but to reform the morals of the age." And Fielding, in his novel of *Joseph Andrews*, causes Parson Adams to remark: "I never heard of any plays fit for a Christian to read but *Cato* and the *Conscious Lovers*,

and I must own in the latter there are some things almost solemn enough for a sermon." But the example of Steele in his attempted reform of the comedy did not find many imitators. The popular taste for dramatic performances, although improved, continued to be low. "Slight and coarse comedies, or gaudy spectacles with rope dancers and ballets, appear to have been in the greatest favor, and in more serious pieces the love of butchering, so characteristic of the English stage, was long a standing reproach among foreign critics."

In 1719, one Arthur Bedford, with the zeal but not with the judgment of Jeremy Collier, published a pamphlet *Against the Horrid Blasphemies and Impieties which are still used in English Playhouses*, "showing their plain tendency to overthrow all piety and advance the interest and honor of the devil in the world; from almost seven thousand instances taken out of the plays of the present century." He accuses the writers and actors of plays of restoring the pagan worship, and of encouraging witchcraft "in the most blasphemous manner by such plays as *Macbeth* and the *Tempest*." "When God," he says, "was pleased to vindicate his own honor, and show that He would not be thus affronted, by sending a most dreadful storm, . . . yet, so great was the obstinacy of the stage under such signal judgments, that we are told the actors did in a few days after entertain again their audience with the ridiculous plays of the *Tempest* and *Macbeth*, and that at the mention of the chimneys being blown down the audience were pleased to clap at an unusual length, . . . as if they would outbrave the judgment, throw Providence out of the chair, place the devil in his stead, and provoke God once more to plead his own cause by sending a greater calamity." It is worthy of remark that the *Tempest* and *Macbeth* most popular at that time were not the inimitable productions of Shakspeare in their original dress, but adaptations of them by Davenant and Shadwell.

In 1727 appeared the first example of English ballad

opera,—*The Beggar's Opera*, by John Gay. The idea of such a play is said to have been suggested by Dean Swift. It was primarily intended as a burlesque upon the Italian opera, the nervous old ballad of Britain being substituted for the soft, effeminate Italian stanza, and the actors representing the lowest classes of English society. It was, indeed, as Swift had described it in anticipation, a "Newgate pastoral," and "an odd pretty sort of thing." It was acted in London for sixty-three nights in succession, and became immediately popular in all the great towns of Great Britain and Ireland. It was received with so much enthusiasm by the fashionable classes everywhere, that ladies carried about its songs on their fans, and drawing-room screens and curtains were decorated with favorite passages from it; and the actress, Miss Fenton, who played the principal part, became one of the most popular personages in the country. Although not so glaringly indecent as many other plays which we have mentioned, it probably exerted as great an influence towards evil; for, by exhibiting vice in a pleasing form, it no doubt gave it additional attraction to those already inclined in that direction.

Encouraged by the success of his first venture, Gay wrote as a continuation another play which he called *Polly*. This, however, on account of the Lord Mayor's refusal to license it, could not be presented on the stage. Yet it was printed, and in the form of a pamphlet it was received with even greater enthusiasm than that which had greeted the *Beggar's Opera*. Its popularity was mainly due, however, to certain political allusions which it contained rather than to any real worth as a piece of dramatic composition, and it was soon forgotten. It was followed by several other comedies of a similar character designed as vehicles of political satire. Among these were Fielding's *Pasquin: a Dramatic Satire on the Times*; and his *Historical Register* (1737), in which he ridiculed Sir Robert Walpole under the name of Quidam. Another play, called *The Golden Rump*, was intended as a satire upon the king and the royal

family. The appearance of these political comedies induced the passage by Parliament, in 1737, of a new licensing act, which provided that the number of theatres should be diminished, and that no play should be presented until it had been submitted to the Lord Chamberlain and received his sanction.

The comic drama of the latter half of the century was ably represented by the actors Garrick and Foote, the Colemans, and Sheridan. David Garrick was the greatest actor who had appeared on the stage since the days of Shakspeare and the inimitable Burbadge, and with him came the complete revival of the Shakspearian drama. To Nicholas Rowe is due the honor of making the first movement towards this revival. He it was who, in 1709, published the first critical edition of Shakspeare's works. This was followed in rapid succession by the editions of Pope, Theobald, Hanmer, Warburton, and, later, of Dr. Johnson. In 1741, Macklin assisted in presenting upon the stage, whence it had been banished for more than a hundred years, the *Merchant of Venice* in its original form. In the same year, the *Winter's Tale* was revived, also after a hundred years, and Garrick appeared for the first time on the stage in the tragedy of *Richard III.* "He was before all things," says Lecky, "a Shakspearian actor, and he did more than any other single man to extend the popularity and increase the reputation of the great dramatist." He wrote several comedies, the best of which are *The Lying Valet* and *The Miss in her Teens*.

Oliver Goldsmith's comedy, entitled *She Stoops to Conquer*, was produced at Covent Garden in 1773. It was characterized at the time as one of the gayest, pleasantest pieces of the kind ever produced,—in fact, the best comedy of the eighteenth century. It abounds in rollicking drollery and sparkling wit, and its popularity has not yet altogether disappeared. The skill with which it is constructed is indicative of true dramatic genius.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan may be regarded as the last

of the comic dramatists of the classical school. His two great works are *The Rivals* (1775), and *The School for Scandal* (1777). Of these, the former excels in the portrayal of humorous characters, and in the lively narration of incident; the latter abounds in witty dialogue and flashing satire. Both still remain favorites on the stage. Sheridan also wrote an amusing farce, scarcely less meritorious than his comedies, entitled *The Critic; or, a Tragedy Rehearsed*. It is similar in plan to the Duke of Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, previously noticed. These works of Sheridan are perhaps the most popular of all the productions of the comic drama. "Whether acted or read, they are equally delightful, an incessant blaze of intellectual fireworks." Hazlitt says: "Sheridan has been justly called a dramatic star of the first magnitude; and, indeed, among the comic writers of the last century, he shines 'like Hesperus among the lesser lights.'"

Byron's extravagant eulogy of Sheridan has been often quoted: "Whatsoever he has chosen to do has been, *par excellence*, always the best of its kind. He has written the best comedy (*The School for Scandal*); the best drama (*The Rivals*, in my mind far before that St. Giles lampoon, *The Beggars' Opera*); the best farce (*The Critic*—it is only too good for a farce); and the best address (*The Monologue on Garrick*)."

M. Taine says: "Sheridan has taste, he appreciates the refinements of style, the worth of a new image, of a striking contrast, of a witty and well-considered insinuation. He has, above all, wit, a wonderful conversational wit, the art of rousing and sustaining the attention, of being biting, varied, of taking his hearers unawares, of throwing in a repartee, of setting folly in relief, of accumulating one after another witticisms and happy phrases."

Having traced the history of English comedy to its close, let us return to the subject of tragedy, and observe its widely different progress during the eighteenth century. One of the most remarkable dramas written in the earlier part of

this period is the tragedy of *Cato*, by Joseph Addison. It was first produced in 1713, and for a short time enjoyed a wonderful popularity. The prologue was written by Pope, and the epilogue by Dr. Garth. Its first representation was in the Drury Lane theatre, then under the management of Colley Cibber. The supposed political allusions contained in the tragedy were construed by each party to be favorable to itself, and this increased the enthusiasm with which it was received. The play is constructed, as a matter of course, after French models, and the so-called unities of the Greek stage are observed with the strictest attention. It contains a great deal of excellent dialogue, and dignified, even noble declamation. Yet, on the whole, it is "a solemn, frigid piece, almost without action, and without a single truly sublime and soul-moving passage." The passage most quoted and best known is the soliloquy on suicide pronounced by Cato; but even it is almost entirely destitute of feeling or of energy. Schlegel says: "Addison has so narrowed a great and heroic picture by his timid manner of treating it, that he could not, without foreign intermixture, even fill up the frame. Hence he had recourse to the traditional love-intrigues; if we count well, we shall find in this piece no fewer than six persons in love. With the exception of Sempronius, the villain of the piece, the lovers are one and all somewhat silly. Cato, who ought to be the soul of the whole, is hardly ever shown to us in action; nothing remains for him but to admire himself and to die. . . . A single dialogue between Brutus and Cassius in Shakspeare exhibits more of the Roman way of thinking, and more of republican energy, than there is shown in all *Cato*."

In 1737, when Samuel Johnson and David Garrick—teacher and pupil—came to London friendless and unknown, the former carried in his pocket a part of the manuscript of a tragedy called *Irene*. Twelve years afterwards, Garrick, now risen to the front rank among actors, and manager of the Drury Lane theatre, presented this

tragedy to the public. It was a stilted, monotonous performance, not at all suited to the stage, nor worthy of its great author. It ran nine nights at Drury Lane, and was then consigned to deserved oblivion.

By this time, as we have already observed, the public mind had begun to turn with new appreciation to the dramas of Shakspeare and of the other great writers of the period when fancy and imagination were still untrammelled by rules. The foreign and artificial models which had, for nearly a century, regulated and controlled the popular tastes, had begun to lose their influence, and a reaction was on the point of setting in. In 1756, one John Home, a Scotch Presbyterian minister, wrote a tragedy wherein he ignored the absurd system of imitation which had so long prevailed, and attempted to restore the freedom and the naturalness of the older drama. The title of his tragedy is *Douglas*. It received, as might have been expected, but small favor at the time of its first presentation, and it so much offended the Presbytery that its author was obliged to resign his parish of Athelstaneford and retire to England. And although so great a critic as Sir Walter Scott has pronounced it a masterpiece, "one of the best acting plays in existence," it is now chiefly remembered for the passage beginning:

My name is Norval; on the Grampian hills
My father feeds his flocks.

And yet, notwithstanding the neglect which the tragedy of *Douglas* received, it was the forerunner of an improved taste and a return to that system of nature which had been ignored and reviled ever since the days when the perfumed courtiers of Charles II. ruled the stage. The classical drama was superseded by the modern drama, which, though falling far short of the glorious conceptions and creations of its prototype of the Elizabethan age, has yet produced some works worthy of a permanent and

honorable place in our dramatic literature. We must be content with merely the briefest notice of some of the most important of these.

Lord Byron was the author of several tragedies. *The Two Foscari* (1811) is an historical tragedy in five acts, possessing but little merit. *Werner; or, the Inheritance* (1822), is a tragedy taken entirely from the *German's Tale* in Lee's *Canterbury Tales*, and as Byron tells us, was neither intended for the stage, nor is it in any way adapted to it. *Cain: a Mystery* (1821), so called in imitation of "the title anciently annexed to dramas on similar subjects," is a tragedy in which the author gives expression to that spirit of unbelief and those melancholy and misanthropical feelings which characterize his life and writings. *Manfred* (1817) is perhaps the best known of Byron's dramas. It is a dramatical poem, similar to Goethe's *Faust*, and, as M. Taine says, "its twin brother," yet it is not an imitation. Byron writes: "His *Faust* I never read, for I don't know German; but Matthew Monk Lewis, in 1816, at Coligny, translated most of it to me *viva voce*, and I was naturally struck with it; but it was the Steinbach and the Jungfrau and something else, much more than *Faustus*, that made me write *Manfred*." There is no action in this piece; it is only a series of soliloquies. There is really but one character—an idealized image of the poet himself. In short, there is nothing dramatic in the performance which would not have appeared to as good advantage in the ordinary dress of a descriptive poem. Lord Jeffrey says: "It is a grand and terrific vision of a being invested with superhuman attributes, in order that he may be capable of more than human sufferings, and be sustained under them by more than human force and pride." *Sardanapalus, a historical tragedy* (1821), is still sometimes represented upon the stage, from the fact that it affords room for much scenic display and decoration. The author explains in his preface that, although aware of the unpopularity of the notion, he has attempted so far to return to classical models as to

approach, if not to preserve, the "unities" which is "an opinion, not long ago, the law of literature throughout the world, and still so in the more civilized parts of it." Byron was not a dramatist. There was nothing dramatic in his genius; and, save in form, there is nothing dramatic in his works. There is everywhere that sameness in his characters that we have found in his narrative poems; his incidents are tame or ill-conceived; his dialogue, when not declamation, is mere soliloquy. And yet there are some of his dramas which will well repay reading.

The two most remarkable poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley are dramatic in form,—*Prometheus Unbound* and *The Cenci*, both written in 1819. *Prometheus Unbound* is intended as a sequel to the great Greek tragedy of Æschylus, *Prometheus Bound*; but it is rather a noble lyric than a drama. "The world in which the action is supposed to move rings with spirit voices; and what these spirits sing is melody more purged of mortal dross than any other poet's ear has caught, while listening to his own heart's song, or to the rhythms of the world. There are hymns in *Prometheus* which seem to realize the miracle of making words, detached from meaning, the substance of a new ethereal music; and yet although their verbal harmony is such, they are never devoid of significance for those who understand."* And this poem is, too, a sublime allegory. Prometheus, chained to the rock, is Humanity suffering from Evil impersonated by Jupiter. Evil is overcome by struggling Humanity, and the world is rejuvenated; a new age of gold is inaugurated, in which mankind no longer suffers the pains and burdens of mortality, but rejoices in peace and freedom and unconfined energy. Then the spirit of Nature—the perfect union and embodiment of Life, Love, and Beauty—impersonated by Asia, appears in such triumphant loveliness that baser forms cannot see her, but only feel her heavenly influence. To adore this spirit, to blend with it,

* J. A. Symonds: *Shelley*, p. 124.

to follow its infallible guidance, is the highest duty, the true object of Humanity. The freed, triumphant Prometheus is united to the divine and glorified Asia; Humanity is wedded to Nature, the universe is regenerated, and Good reigns over all. Stedman says of this work: "The *Prometheus Unbound*, grand as it is, is classical only in some of its personages and in the mythical germ of its conception,—a sublime poem, full of absorbing beauty, but antique neither in spirit nor in form."

The *Cenci* is a drama constructed according to the severest rules of tragedy. It is devoid alike of imagery and description. The language is vigorous and masculine, but there are occasional passages of wonderful tenderness and feeling. In those powerful and striking scenes of terror and of crime, and in those thrilling delineations of passion and suffering contained in the drama, the author approaches more nearly to the noble yet terrible creations of John Webster than has any other dramatist before or since. The story of this drama is founded upon the well-known history of Beatrice Cenci, a subject entirely unsuitable to the stage. But in its printed form the *Cenci* became immediately popular, and it now occupies an honorable and permanent position in our dramatic literature. Leigh Hunt says of Shelley: "Had he lived, he would assuredly have been the greatest dramatic writer since the days of Elizabeth; if, indeed, he has not abundantly proved himself such in his tragedy of the *Cenci*. In general, if Coleridge is the sweetest of our poets, Shelley is at once the most ethereal and most gorgeous,—the one who has clothed his thoughts in draperies of the most evanescent and most magnificent words and imagery. . . . His poetry is full of mountains, seas, and skies, of light, and darkness, and the seasons, and all the elements of our being, as if nature herself had written it, with the creation and its hopes newly cast around her, not, it must be confessed, without too indiscriminate a mixture of great and small, and a want of sufficient shade, a certain chaotic brilliancy,

'dark with excess of light.'" The student of English poetry cannot form any just conception of Shelley's great works through the reading of mere selections; he should turn to them and study them thoroughly in their entirety.

The most popular and successful dramatist of the present century was Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. His *Lady of Lyons* and *Richelieu* still retain their places on the stage, and all of their original popularity. His dramas generally possess that happy mixture of wisdom, wit, and eloquence which is sure to attract the ordinary theatre-goer, but they rarely, if at all, exhibit the finer and more ethereal quality of poetic excellence such as we have found in Shelley's inimitable pieces.

Robert Browning has written some dramas, but they have not proven successful when presented upon the stage. His tragedy of *Strafford* was produced in 1837. Stedman says of it: "The action moves with sufficient rapidity, yet in a confused and turbulent way. The characters are eccentrically drawn, and are more serious and mystical than even the gloom of their period would demand." *The Blot on the 'Scutcheon* is the title of another drama. It was produced at Drury Lane theatre in 1843, but failed.

Alfred Tennyson is the author of two historical dramas, *Queen Mary* (1875), and *Harold* (1876). These works are probably the best specimens of Shakspearian dramas written since the time of Shakspeare. The student is advised to read them and to form his own critical judgment concerning their merits.

Algernon Charles Swinburne has written three tragedies: *Atlanta in Calydon*; *Chastelard*; and *Bothwell*. An American critic says: "*Atlanta* reads like an inspired translation. As a work of art, it still remains the poet's flawless effort, showing the most objective purpose, and clarified by the necessity of restraint. . . . *Chastelard* is warm-blooded and modern, charged with lurid passion and romance. The chief personages are drawn strongly and distinctly, and the language is true to the matter and the time. The

whole play is intensely emotional." *Bothwell* is a continuation of *Chastelard*. Concerning it the same critic remarks: "Swinburne, by this massive and heroic composition, has placed himself in the front line of our poets; no one can be thought his superior in true dramatic power. Considered as a dramatic epic, this work has no parallel."

REFERENCES.

HISTORICAL STUDIES.

IN order to a thorough understanding and appreciation of the subjects treated in this chapter, the student should possess a very full knowledge of the history and social condition of England during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. He should study the causes of the Puritan Revolution, and both its immediate and later influences. Then he should make himself acquainted with the peculiar conditions of society which prevailed during the time of the later Stuarts, the causes of the Revolution of 1688, and its great results, and finally the history of the reigns of Queen Anne and the first George. The later drama has not so intimate a connection with politics and society in general, and hence the history of the last hundred and fifty years may be postponed until another occasion.

LITERARY STUDIES.

THE DRAMA IN GENERAL: Collier's *Dramatic Poetry and Annals of the Stage* (1831); Dodsley's *Old Plays*: edited by Collier (1825); Ward's *History of the Drama*; Coleridge's *Literary Remains*; Schlegel's *Dramatic Literature*.

MYSTERIES AND MIRACLE-PLAYS: *An Essay on the Origin of the English Stage*, in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*; Warton's *History of English Poetry*; *Shakspeare's Life, Art, and Characters*, by Rev. H. N. Hudson, vol. i.; White's *Introduction to the Study of Shakspeare's Works*; Morley's *English Writers*.

SHAKSPEARE AND THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMATISTS: *The Works of Rev. H. N. Hudson*; *The Works of Richard Grant White*; Whipple's *Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*; Lowell's *Among My Books*; Taine's *English Literature*; Hazlitt's *Age of Elizabeth*; *Characters of Shakspeare's Plays*; and *Comic Writers*; Abbot's *Shakspearian Grammar*; Coleridge's *Literary Remains*; Craik's *English of Shakspeare*; De Quincey's *Writings*; Leigh Hunt's *Imagination and Fancy*; Mrs. Cowden Clarke's *Concordance to Shakspeare*;

Dowden's *Mind and Art of Shakspeare*; Weiss's *Wit, Humor, and Shakspeare*; Morgan's *The Shakspearian Myth*; the various publications of the Shakspeare Society and of the New Shakspeare Society; the various editions of Shakspeare's Works, named below.

THE COMIC DRAMATISTS OF THE RESTORATION: Hazlitt's *English Comic Writers*; Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*; Thackeray's *English Humorists*; Macaulay's *Essays*; Green's *History of the English People*.

SHELLEY: Moore's *Life of Lord Byron*; Swinburne's *Essays and Studies*; De Quincey's *Essays*; Leigh Hunt's *Imagination and Fancy*; Symond's *Shelley*, in *English Men of Letters*.

EDITIONS OF SHAKSPEARE.

- First Folio Edition (1623).
- Second Folio Edition (1632).
- Third Folio Edition (1664).
- Rowe's Edition. (7 vols., 8vo, London, 1709.)
- Pope's Edition. (6 vols., 4to, London, 1725.)
- Theobald's Edition. (7 vols., 8vo, 1733.)
- Hanmer's Edition. (6 vols., 4to, Oxford, 1744-46.)
- Warburton's Edition. (8 vols., 8vo, London, 1747.)
- Johnson's Edition. (8 vols., 8vo, 1765.)
- Capell's Edition. (10 vols., 8vo, 1767.)
- Malone's Edition. (11 vols., 8vo, 1790.)
- The First Variorum Edition. (21 vols., 1813.)
- The Variorum Edition. (21 vols., 1821.)
- Singer's Edition. (10 vols., foolscap, 8vo, 1826.)
- Knight's Edition. (8 vols., 8vo, 1839-41.)
- Collier's Edition. (8 vols., 8vo, 1841-44.)
- Verplanck's Edition. (3 vols., 8vo, New York, 1847.)
- Hudson's Edition. (11 vols., 12mo, Boston, 1850-57.)
- Dyce's Edition. (6 vols., 8vo, 1850-1867.)
- Mary Cowden Clarke's Edition. (2 vols., 8vo, New York, 1860.)
- R. G. White's Edition. (12 vols., 12mo, Boston, 1857-62.)
- Clark and Wright's Edition. (9 vols., 8vo, London, 1863-66.)
- The Leopold Edition. (1 vol., London, 1877.)
- The Harvard Edition. (20 vols., 12mo, Boston, 1881.)
- The Variorum Shakspeare. Edited by H. H. Furness. (— vols., Philadelphia, 1871 —.)

CHAPTER VIII.

EPIC POETRY.

Definition—Essential Qualities of the Epic Poem—Great Epics—John Milton—His Life—His Learning—Paradise Lost—History of its Production—Its Plan—Analysis of the Poem—Milton's Choice of Subject—The Style of Paradise Lost—The Metre—The Characters—General Criticisms—Methods of Study—Passages deserving Special Study—Sources from which Milton may have received Assistance—Paradise Regained—The Davideis, by Cowley—Blackmore's Prince Arthur—Glover's Leonidas—Wilkie's Epigoniad—Southey's So-called Epics—Landor's Gebir—Heroic Poetry—The Bruce, by John Barbour—Gondibert, by Sir William Davenant—Mock Heroics—The Rape of the Lock, by Alexander Pope.

AN epic poem is one which is written in a lofty and somewhat impassioned style, and which deals principally with the fortunes of a hero, but which, by its length and character, admits of a great diversity of topics and variety of treatment. Aristotle, in enumerating the essential qualities of an epic poem, says that it should be dramatically constructed after the manner of tragedy, and that it should have for its subject one entire and perfect action, "with a beginning, a middle, and an end." The principal personages must be of high rank and exalted character. The style must possess a sublime dignity in full accord with the loftiness of the subject. The action may be developed variously, by narration, dialogue, soliloquy, and apostrophe. In a word, an epic poem is a sublime action treated with all the grandeur of style and fullness of detail which the nature of the subject demands or will admit. It is the noblest of all poetic performances.

There have been many attempts at the writing of epic poems, but the very greatness of the undertaking has most generally prevented success. The world can boast of but

three—or, at most, of but four—great epics. These are Homer's *Iliad*; Virgil's *Æneid*; Milton's *Paradise Lost*; to which we may add Dante's *Divina Commedia*. There are other poems of a high degree of merit which may be called epics, but they are of a lower rank than those we have just mentioned. Among these may be mentioned Homer's *Odyssey*; Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*; and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. But in English poetry the only real epic is *Paradise Lost*. It stands so immeasurably superior to all other attempts at epic production in our language, that to institute any comparison would be not only irrelevant but impossible.

John Milton was born in London on the 9th of December, 1608. His father, an ardent republican in full sympathy with Puritan doctrines, was by profession a money-scrivener, but a gentleman of more than ordinary intellectual abilities, and of high moral excellence. From him the poet doubtless derived most, if not all, of those political and religious opinions which had so marked an influence upon his life. From childhood the boy showed unmistakable signs of the wonderful intellectual powers which were to distinguish him through all time, and he early decided upon the profession of literature as his life's vocation. He was, at first, carefully educated at home, then at St. Paul's School, London, and, at the age of sixteen, he entered Christ's College, Cambridge. He remained in the university a little more than seven years, leaving it in July, 1632, with the degree of Master of Arts. After this he resided for five years with his father at the country-seat of the family, at Horton. Then he traveled for some months on the continent, visiting the great seats of learning, and adding largely to his stores of knowledge and experience. Upon the breaking out of the civil war in England, he returned home; for, as he said, he thought it disgraceful while his fellow-countrymen were fighting for liberty, that he should be traveling abroad for pleasure.

The twenty years which succeeded (1640-1660) was a

period of the most intense political excitement, and Milton, who, previous to this time, had written many delightful poems,* now confined himself to the composition of prose treatises and controversial tracts on the topics of the times. Upon the restoration of Charles II., in 1660, he withdrew from public, and the remainder of his life was passed in the closest retirement. Blind, disappointed, and in poverty, he continued his literary labors, and in these latter years produced his greatest works. In 1667 he published *Paradise Lost*, and a short time afterwards *Paradise Regained*. In 1671 appeared his last work, *Samson Agonistes*, a tragedy written according to the rules of the Greek drama. Milton died on the 8th of November, 1674, at the age of sixty-six.

Of the extent of Milton's learning, one critic says: "His studies embraced the whole circle of human knowledge; the literature of every age and of every cultivated language, living and dead, gave up all its stores of truth and beauty to his all-embracing mind; the most arduous subtleties of philosophy, the loftiest mysteries of theological learning, were familiar to him: there is no art, no science, no profession, with which he was not more or less acquainted; and however we may wonder at the majesty of his genius, the extent of his acquirements is no less astounding."

But another writer says: "Milton was not a learned man. Such men there were in his day,—Usher, Selden, Voss, in England; in Holland, Milton's adversary, Salmasius, and many more. A learned man was one who could range freely and surely over the whole of classical and patristic remains in the Greek and Latin Languages, with the accumulated stores of philological, chronological, and historical criticism necessary for the interpretation of those remains. Milton had neither made these acquisitions nor aimed at them. He cultivated not letters, but himself, and

* Chief among these poems are *The Hymn on the Nativity*; *L'Allegro*; *Il Penseroso*; and *The Masque of Comus*.

sought to enter into the possession of his own mental kingdom, not that he might reign there, but that he might royally use its resources in building up a work which should bring honor to his country and his native tongue."

That great work which he finally gave to the world was *Paradise Lost*. Milton had long contemplated such a work. From notes and memoranda now in existence, it is known that as early as 1638 he had resolved to write a great poem; but he had neither chosen its subject nor decided upon its general character. At first, he had thought of the story of Prince Arthur as a suitable theme; but this idea he soon abandoned. He occupied the winter of 1639-40 in searching for a subject. A manuscript, written by him at that time and now preserved at Cambridge, contains a list of proposed subjects, and sketches of subjects, ninety-nine in number. Sixty-one of these subjects are derived from Scripture, and thirty-eight from British history. The first general idea of *Paradise Lost* was conceived in 1640, but it was in the form of a drama that the subject was then contemplated. There are no fewer than four drafts of the work as thus first conceived, and all are in the dramatic form. Had Milton's literary life and projects not been interrupted, had not the great cause of liberty called him forth to another and a different field of labor, it is probable that instead of the great epic we should have received from him only a second-rate drama. The twenty years of rude interruption not only served to modify and improve the plan of the poem, but it enabled its author, through matured reflection and ripened judgment, to make it far grander and more complete than would otherwise have been possible.

It was not until the year 1658 that he began the actual performance of the work which he had so long contemplated, and it was during the gloomiest period of his life that this work was brought to completion. Shaw says: "There is no spectacle in the history of literature more touching and sublime than Milton, blind, poor, persecuted, and alone,

'fallen upon evil days and evil tongues, with dangers and with darkness compassed round,' retiring into obscurity to compose those immortal epics which have placed him among the greatest poets of all time. The calm confidence with which he approached his task was the fruit of long meditation, profound study, and fervent prayer."

The following is a brief analysis of the poem :

Paradise Lost is written in twelve books or cantos. Originally, however, the work, being differently divided, contained but ten books. In Book I. the subject is proposed :

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world and all our woe.

Then the author advances "into the midst of things." Satan, the central figure, if not the hero of the action, is introduced. The first awakening of the fallen angels after their expulsion from Heaven is described; their astonishment and dismay; their numbers and appearance; their chief leaders "named according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining." Satan comforts his followers with the hope that they may yet regain heaven. They determine to continue their opposition to the designs of God, but in what manner they are undecided. Satan tells them of the creation of a new world and a new kind of creature, long before spoken of and prophesied in Heaven. A full council of the rebel hosts is determined upon. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, is built, and the infernal peers sit therein.

Book II. describes the council in which the ruin of man is decided upon. The debate of the evil spirits. Moloch declares for open war against Heaven. Belial opposes this idea and advocates quiet submission, with the hope that, by so doing, the Almighty may forget his anger or lessen their pain. Mammon urges the advantages of peace and the quiet acceptance of the inevitable, advising his companions

that, although their world is dark and cheerless, they have the skill to make it magnificent, and that by the long endurance of pain their punishment may cease to be torment. Beelzebub favors neither war nor peace, since they can hope to gain nothing from either; but he advocates rather the spoiling of God's pleasure by the ruining of his creation. His plan meets with favor, and all hell applauds his speech. Satan undertakes to discover the whereabouts of the new world and the means of carrying out Beelzebub's suggestions. His journey to the gates of hell is described, and his meeting there with Sin and Death.

Book III. opens with an apostrophe to Light, one of the most beautiful passages in the poem. A council in Heaven is then described, wherein God the Father converses with God the Son in relation to the new world just created, and to the new creature—man. The Son offers to become a propitiation for the foreseen sins of Adam and his descendants, and his offer is gladly accepted by the Father. In the latter half of this book the story of Satan's journey is resumed. He is directed on his course to this world by Chaos. He alights on the "outer convex of this orb," and tarries awhile in the Limbo of Vanity, or the Paradise of Fools. Then, disguised as a good spirit, he visits the Sun, where he meets the angel Uriel, by whom he is further directed on his way to the newly-created Earth. The book closes with a prospect of Eden—Satan, still in the guise of an angel, standing on Mount Niphates.

Book IV. describes the Garden of Eden and the innocence and happiness of Adam and Eve. Their bower is described, their evening prayer and their innocent sleep. Then Satan, in the shape of a toad, endeavors to tempt Eve through dreams. He is discovered by the angelic guard, but is allowed to escape.

Book V. describes the coming of morning in Eden. Adam awakens Eve. She relates her dream, and Adam comforts her. The morning prayer of our first parents. Their employment in the garden. The angel Raphael

comes to warn them of the danger which impends. He begins the recital of the story of the rebellion in Heaven. The book ends with the speech of Satan to his followers on the eve of the great battle between the rebel hosts and the loyal angels.

Book VI. continues the angel's story of the War in Heaven. The complete triumph of the Son over the disobedient spirits, and their final expulsion from Heaven.

Book VII. begins with an invocation to Urania, in which the poet prays the Muse to govern the remainder of his song, "and fit audience find, though few." Raphael is then represented as relating, at Adam's request, the story of the Creation, as found in the first chapter of Genesis.

Book VIII. contains the further conversation between Adam and the angel Raphael. Adam makes inquiries in regard to the motions of the heavenly bodies, but receives an ambiguous answer. Then he relates what he remembers of his own creation and of his meeting with Eve.

Book IX. is the story of the temptation and of the eating of the forbidden fruit. It closes with the mutual accusations with which the sinful pair spent

The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning;
And of their vain contest appeared no end.

Book X. tells how the guardian angels, learning of man's transgression, forsake the garden. God sends his Son to judge the transgressors and to pass sentence upon them. Satan returns to Pandemonium and relates the success of his expedition. Adam and Eve lament their fault and resolve to ask forgiveness.

Book XI. relates how God, having heard and accepted the prayers of our first parents, yet declares that they must be driven out of Paradise. The angel Michael is sent to execute this sentence. Eve bewails her exile; but Michael, leading Adam up to a high hill, reveals to him all that shall happen to man before the coming of the flood.

Book XII. continues this prophetic picture, and reveals

what shall occur after the flood. Adam is comforted and greatly satisfied by being assured of the Redeemer's coming and of man's final salvation. "Michael, in either hand, leads the pair out of Paradise, the fiery sword waving behind them and the cherubim taking their stations to guard the place."

In regard to Milton's choice of subject a great deal has been written by the critics. Pattison says: "Not the critics merely, but readers ready to sympathize, have been sometimes inclined to wish that Milton had devoted his powers to a more human subject, in which the poet's invention could have had freer play, and for which his readers' interest could have been more ready. And it has been thought that the choice of a Biblical subject indicates the narrowing effect of age, adversity, and blindness combined. . . . In selecting a scriptural subject, he was, however, not exercising any choice, but was determined by his circumstances. With all his originality, Milton was still a man of his age. A Puritan poet in a Puritan environment could not have done otherwise. But even had choice been in his power, it is doubtful if he would have had the same success with a subject taken from history."

Masson says: "The subject was one of those which already possessed, in a marked degree, that quality of hereditary and widely-diffused interest which fits subjects for the purposes of great poets. Milton, it may be said, inherited a subject with which the imagination of Christendom had long been fascinated, and which had been nibbled at again and again by poets in and out of England, though by none managed to its complete capabilities."

Hallam: "The subject of *Paradise Lost* is the finest that has ever been chosen for heroic poetry; it is also managed by Milton with remarkable skill. . . . It must be owned, nevertheless, that a religious epic labors under some disadvantages; in proportion as it attracts those who hold the same tenets with the author, it is regarded by those who dissent from him with indifference or aversion.

It is also difficult to enlarge or adorn such a story by fiction. Milton has done much in this way; yet he was partly restrained by the necessity of conforming to Scripture."

And Arnold: "There cannot, of course, be two opinions with regard to the importance and universal interest of the subject of *Paradise Lost* considered in itself; but whether it is a surpassingly good subject for an epic poem is a different question. One obvious difficulty with it is its brevity and deficiency in incident: it is not sufficiently complex. Compare it with the subjects chosen by Homer, Virgil, and Tasso. . . . The materials consist of the first three chapters in the book of Genesis and a few verses in the Apocalypse; there is absolutely nothing more. . . . The very nature of his subject did not allow him the liberty of amplification and expansion; and that he felt this difficulty is clear, for he has avoided as much as possible inventing any new incident, and, to gain the length required for an epic poem, has introduced numerous long dialogues and descriptive passages."

And Taine: "Would to heaven he could have written it as he tried, in the shape of a drama, or better, as the Prometheus of Æschylus, as a lyric opera! A peculiar kind of subject demands a peculiar kind of style; if you resist, you destroy your work, too happy if, in the deformed medley, chance produces and preserves a few beautiful fragments."

The Style.—Speaking of the poem as a whole, we cannot but say that the style of *Paradise Lost* is grand—it is sublime. No English writer has equaled Milton in making the language give forth a sound corresponding to the sense. He is the master of sound. "Shelley is never more soft and sweet; Byron not more tumultuously sonorous; Shakespeare not more subtile in his cadences." Some one has compared the "long majestic march and energy divine," which were peculiarly Milton's, to the grand progress of an army of giants moving irresistibly over forests and moun-

tains, over meadows and the rolling sea. And yet there is an ever-changing harmony in this majestic movement which invests it at times with a sweetness and beauty seldom excelled.

Nevertheless there are grave defects in the style of this great poem; blemishes which are all the more noticeable by reason of the greatness of the work; as, in a precious stone, we observe the slight flaws which in one of less value would be unperceived. Addison, in one of his criticisms in the *Spectator*, enumerates some of these faults. In the first place, the language is often labored, and the sense is sometimes obscured by the use of obsolete words, by transpositions, and by foreign idioms. For example, we find the word "obvious" used in the sense of "meeting;" "pontifical" in the sense of "bridge-making;" "pretended" for "drawn before," and numerous other expressions used in a sense never before or since employed by English writers. Greek and Latin idioms occur frequently. For example: "How camest thou speakable of mute?" "And knew not eating death;" "O miserable of happy," etc. Then, again, there are numerous sentences which appear as if they had been studiously made as complex as possible. "They are," says Masson, "not dense merely, but contorted or gnarled in structure." Another fault is that Milton often affects "a kind of jingle in his words," due, no doubt, to the lingering influence of the euphuism so popular in the Elizabethan age. The following will serve for examples.

"Beseeching or besieging——"

"This tempted our attempt——"

"And brought into the world a world of woe."

Then, again, the poet delights in the frequent use of long-drawn technical words and expressions:

"With centric or eccentric scribbled o'er,
Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb."

“Rays culminating from the equator.”

“Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb.”

“Doric pillars overlaid with golden architrave.”

The Metre.—The verse is the blank unrhymed verse of ten syllables, usually known as iambic pentameter, or heroic verse. Marlowe, in his tragedy of *Tamburlaine*, had made this the popular verse of the drama; and it had been quite generally used by Shakspeare and the other Elizabethan dramatists. Milton himself had previously made use of it in the masque of *Comus*. But, with the single exception of Surrey, in his translation of Virgil, no poet had yet employed it in any form of narrative verse. Milton, in his preface, explaining “why the poem rhymes not,” says:

“This neglect of rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so, perhaps, to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of riming.”

No other writer has ever succeeded in giving to the unrhymed pentameter that flexibility which it has acquired in the hands of Milton. So great license, indeed, has the poet allowed himself, that it is difficult to find two consecutive verses having a similar structure and accentuation throughout. Every modification of arrangement, every possible disposition of emphasis, is employed, in order to accommodate the sound to the sense and to produce the pleasing variety and harmony which prevails. Nevertheless there is occasionally such absolute carelessness and disregard of the rules of metrical composition as seriously to mar the beauties of the verse; as, for example:

“But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles.”

“Such solitude before choicest society.”

The Characters.—There are but two human personages—Adam and Eve—represented in the poem. All the rest are supernatural. This fact tending to decrease our human interest in the plot, in like proportion increases our interest in the work of the poet as an artist. We cannot sympathize with our first parents as we would sympathize with other human beings, because, in their state of innocence, they were not as other men and women. They are the typical man and woman, sinless, free, perfect. How well Milton has succeeded in his portraiture of their characters, the careful student may determine by a study of the poem itself. "There is nothing in all art," says Brooke, "which resembles this great outline of Milton, an outline as of the early gods, except Michel Angelo's two frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, of Adam and of Eve coming into life." But Taine says: "Adam is your true paterfamilias, with a vote, an M.P., an old Oxford man, consulted at need by his wife, dealing out to her with prudent measure the scientific explanations which she requires. . . . Eve, like a good housewife, talks about the *menu*, and is rather proud of her kitchen-garden. . . . She, too, is from Oxford, and has also learned law in the inns about the temple."

Satan, it has often been said, is the hero of *Paradise Lost*. True, in the first half of the poem he is the active central figure, the aggressor. But his course is downward. He accomplishes his object only to bring down direst curses on his own head. On the other hand, there is, about the human personages in the poem, a dignity and moral elevation unknown, and, indeed, impossible to Satan. Then, too, they are, after all, the true pivot upon which the whole action revolves. Again, there is, in their case, a constant advancement, and in the end a prospective victory over their enemy. The true hero of the poem is not any single personage, but the whole human race as represented by their progenitors, Adam and Eve.

It has been objected, and, perhaps, justly, that Milton's representation of the Supreme Being is such as to belittle

Him in our estimation. One's conception of the Deity and reverence for Him will hardly be elevated or improved by the pictures given of Him in *Paradise Lost*. Taine says: "Milton's Jehovah is a grave king, who maintains a suitable state, something like Charles I. . . . Goethe's God, half abstraction, half legend, source of calm oracles, greatly excels this Miltonic God, a business man, a schoolmaster, an ostentatious man!"

Then how very materialistic is Milton's idea of heaven! The angels, with their harps in their hands, singing eternal cantatas before the King; the learned discussion between the Father and the Son; the decision of the Deity to crown his Son King—"partner-king, if you prefer it;" the great feast held in honor of the heir; the arming of the rebellious angels; the use of gunpowder and cannon in heaven: all these, although they may have appealed powerfully to the realistic imaginations of the Puritans, cannot fail to detract largely from our enjoyment of the poem. Compare this heaven, where the universal motion is obedience, with the heaven of Dante, animated and controlled solely by love,—“the souls floating like stars amid the harmonies, the mingled splendors, the mystic roses radiating and vanishing in the azure, the impalpable world in which all the laws of earthly life are dissolved, the unfathomable abyss traversed by fleeting visions, like golden bees gliding in the rays of the deep central sun!” Compare it, too, with the vision of St. John as related in the Apocalypse (Rev. i. xii.), and then judge whether he, who excelled in so many things, has, in this instance, improved upon his models.

Criticisms on the General Character of the Poem.—The first public criticism on *Paradise Lost* was written by Addison, and appeared in a series of articles in the *Spectator*, in the year 1712. Comparing Milton's poem with the *Iliad* and with the *Aeneid*, Addison awards the meed of praise to *Paradise Lost*. It was this criticism which first called the attention of the literary world to the extraordinary merits of the great English epic, and possibly rescued it from undeserved oblivion.

Masson, the ablest critic of Milton now living, says: "*Paradise Lost* is an epic. But it is not, like the *Iliad* or the *Æneid*, a national epic; nor is it an epic after any other of the known types. It is an epic of the whole human species,—an epic of our entire planet, or indeed of the entire astronomical universe."

As to the internal structure of the poem, it meets all of the requirements of Aristotle: it has a definite beginning, middle, and end such as characterize few other epic poems. Its action possesses the three requisite qualities: it is one action, it is an entire action, it is a great action. The whole is worked out with great vigor and carefulness of detail.

Brooke says: "*Paradise Lost* is one of the few universal poems of the world; imperial in the sense that the work of Homer and Virgil and Dante and Shakspeare is; worthy to exercise command over the heart and intellect of all ages. Its majesty and beauty are beyond praise; its faults should be spoken of by smaller men with truth, but with reverence. But all may tell of the pleasure that it gives them, and strive to find the sources of that pleasure, and the more fully any one can do this the more he will feel his soul enlarged."

But Taine: "A Protestant, enslaved by a strict theology, robbed of the style which makes the supernatural visible, deprived of the dramatic sensibility which creates varied and living souls, Milton accumulates cold dissertations, transforms man and God into orthodox and vulgar machines, and only regains his genius in endowing Satan with his republican soul, in multiplying grand landscapes and colossal apparitions, in consecrating his poetry to the praise of religion and duty."

And Johnson: "The defects and faults of *Paradise Lost* (for faults and defects every work of man must have) it is the business of impartial criticism to discover. As, in displaying the excellence of Milton, I have not made long quotations, because of selecting beauties there had been no

end, I shall, in the same general manner, mention that which seems to deserve censure. For what Englishman can take delight in transcribing passages, which, if they lessen the reputation of Milton, diminish in some degree the honor of the country?"

Coleridge, in his *Literary Remains*, ranks the *Paradise Lost* above the *Iliad* and the *Divina Commedia*.

Shaw says: "Dante is the Christian Homer, Milton the Christian Virgil. If the predominant character of Homer be vivid life and force, and of Virgil majesty and grace, that of Dante is intensity, and of Milton sublimity."

The student desirous of a critical knowledge of *Paradise Lost* should observe the following suggestions:

Secure, if possible, a good edition of the poem. But beware of too many notes. You should, to a great extent, make your own notes.

Do not attempt to read too much at a time, but thoroughly master everything you read. Understand the meaning of every passage. Study the meaning of every mythological or historical reference. Notice every peculiarity of construction and arrangement.

Determine whatever merits or defects there may be in the passages read.

Study the metre, any peculiarities in the verse, etc.

Try to understand the feelings and the full meaning of the author.

Read the passage aloud.

Write the passage in good prose, using your own words.

The following are the passages most worthy of special study:

The Invocation. I., 1-26.

Satan's Speech. I., 242-270.

Description of Pandemonium. I., 670-751.

The Exploration of Hell. II., 570-628.

Meeting with Sin and Death. II., 629-889.

Apostrophe to Light. III., 1-55.

- The Fool's Paradise. III., 418-497.
 Description of Eden. IV., 172-357.
 Meeting of Adam and Eve. IV., 358-491.
 The Evening Hymn. IV., 720-735.
 The Morning Hymn. V., 153-208.
 Invocation to Urania. VII., 1-40.
 Concerning Celestial Motions. VIII., 66-178.
 The Temptation. IX., 412-959.
 Adam's Lament. X., 720-862.
 The Upbraiding of Eve. X., 863-946.
 The Prayers of our first Parents. XI., 1-21.
 Vision of the Flood. XI., 712-867.
 Michael's Exhortation. XII., 552-605.
 Departure from Eden. XII., 632-649.

The following are the sources from which Milton doubtless obtained suggestions and assistance in the preparation of *Paradise Lost*:

1. The Anglo-Saxon paraphrase of *Cædmon*, a translation of which, by Francis Junius, was published in 1655.
2. The drama of *Lucifer*, by the Dutch poet Joost Van den Vondel, published in 1654.
3. The sacred drama of *L'Adamo*, written by Giovanni Battista Andreini, of Florence, and which Voltaire says Milton saw performed in 1638.
4. A didactic poem, *Semaine, ou Création du Monde*, written in French by Du Bartas, and translated about 1610 by Joshua Sylvester under the title of *The Divine Weeks and Works*.
5. *Christ's Victory and Triumph in Heaven and Earth over and after Death*, a sacred poem, by Giles Fletcher, published in 1640.
6. *Davideis*, an attempted epic, by Abraham Cowley (1656).
7. *Adamus Exul*, a tragedy, by Hugo Grotius (1601).

We close this view of *Paradise Lost* with the famous hexastich of Dryden, which De Quincey pronounces the finest and the worst epigram in the English language:

“Three poets in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn :
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed ;
The next in majesty ; in both, the last.
The force of nature could no further go ;
To make a third, she joined the other two.”

Paradise Regained, the companion epic to *Paradise Lost*, was published in 1671. It is much shorter than the former work, and so far inferior to it in literary merit that it can by no means be called a great epic. Its subject is the temptation of the Saviour in the wilderness, and its action is founded upon the story of that event as recorded in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. It consists of four books, of which the following is a brief analysis:

Book I. opens with an account of the baptism of Christ in Jordan. Satan, who witnesses this act, summons a council of evil spirits, and undertakes to thwart the designs of God by tempting the Son to sin. Jesus is led up into the wilderness, where he passes forty days in fasting, and where, at the end of that time, he is approached by Satan, who attempts to justify himself.

Book II. contains the account of a second infernal council, in which Satan relates the ill-success of his first interview with the Saviour. At the conclusion of his consultation with his peers, he returns to resume his enterprise. He tempts the hungry Saviour, first with a banquet, and afterwards with riches.

In Book III. Satan endeavors to tempt Jesus with a desire for glory, and shows him, in a vision, the kingdoms of Asia.

Book IV. relates how the tempter continued to endeavor to incite in the Saviour a love for the great things of this earth, by showing him the pomp and splendor of imperial Rome and the intellectual glories of Athens. Failing in this attempt, he “raises a tremendous storm, and attempts farther to alarm Jesus with frightful dreams and terrific spectres;” then he carries him to the pinnacle of the temple

and requires him "to prove his divinity either by standing there or casting himself down in safety." Our Saviour reproves the tempter, who returns defeated and abashed to his infernal compeers.

And straight a fiery globe
Of angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plummy vans received him soft
From his uneasy station, and up bore,
As on a flowery couch, through the blithe air:
Then, in a flowery valley, set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food, divine
Ambrosial fruits, fetch'd from the tree of life,
And, from the fount of life, ambrosial drink,
That soon refresh'd him wearied, and repair'd
What hunger, if aught hunger, had impair'd,
Or thirst; and, as he fed, angelic quires
Sung heavenly anthems of his victory
Over temptation and the tempter proud.*

"In grandeur, elevation, and a kind of subdued sentiment," says Mr. Shaw, "*the Paradise Regained* in no sense yields to its immortal companion; but in brilliancy of coloring and intensity of interest it is inferior. It may be said that the beauties of *Paradise Regained* will generally be more perceptible as the reader advances in life, and to those minds in which the contemplative faculty is more developed than the imagination."

Among the numerous and but partially successful attempts at the writing of epic poetry, we shall mention but a few of the most noted:

The Davideis, written by Abraham Cowley, is a long poem in four books, left unfinished by its author and having for its subject "the Troubles of David, King of Israel." The form of versification, the rhymed heroic couplet, is manifestly unsuited to the lofty character of an

* *Paradise Regained*. IV., 581.

epic narrative. The poem is lacking both in beauty of diction and in vigor of thought. The passages in which the author attempts to describe Biblical personages and events in words at variance with the majestic language of the Scriptures prove but weak failures. Dr. Johnson says: "In the perusal of the *Davideis*, as of all Cowley's works, we find art and learning unprofitably squandered. Attention has no relief; the affections are never moved; we are sometimes surprised, but never delighted, and find much to admire and little to approve."

Prince Arthur, by Sir Richard Blackmore (1695), is another attempted epic. It is contained in ten books, and was written, its author says, "by such catches and starts, and in such occasional, uncertain hours as his profession afforded, and for the greatest part in coffee-houses, or in passing up and down the streets." It at first met with decided favor, and, in a very short time, passed through three editions. Its popularity, however, was short-lived, and it has long been regarded with deserved contempt. Cowper says that its author wrote "more absurdities in verse than any writer of our country," and Gay and Southey alike speak of him in terms of ridicule. But Dr. Johnson thinks that "Blackmore, by the unremitted enmity of the wits, whom he provoked more by his virtue than his dullness, has been exposed to worse treatment than he deserved."

Leonidas is the title of a poem written by Richard Glover in 1737. It is not altogether deficient in poetical merit, but as an epic it is a decided failure. It is a story of ancient Greek life and of the Persian wars. Upon its first appearance this poem met with the highest favor and received the most extravagant praise, but it is now almost forgotten.

The Epigoniad, by William Wilkie, was written in 1757. It is an attempted imitation of the *Iliad* of Homer, and relates the story of the siege of Thebes. Its hero is Diomed, and its heroine Cassandra. Like the last-named poem, it is now no longer read, and is fast being consigned to oblivion.

Robert Southey made numerous attempts at the writing of epic poetry, but never succeeded in producing anything really worthy of that designation. His first effort is entitled *Joan of Arc*. It was published in 1796, and consists of ten books written in heroic blank verse. On account of the republican principles which it advocates, it was at first received with great favor, but it is entirely devoid of poetical merit, and is now numbered with those productions which are no longer regarded as true poetry. *Thalaba*, a tale of Arabian enchantment, was published in 1801. This poem contains twelve books, and is written in an irregular metre and without rhyme. It is the story of an Arabian hero who fights strange battles against the powers of evil, and, after a series of wonderful adventures, overthrows the dominion of the demons in the enchanted caves of Dom-daniel. "*Thalaba*," says Dennis, "while it has its wildernesses and deserts, can also boast, as indeed all Southey's epics may, many a fair scene of richness and beauty. Splendor of diction and felicity of description occur frequently, but frequently also the action halts, the verse drags, and the reader feels inclined to resign himself to slumber. On the whole, perhaps the erudition lavished on the poem is more striking than its poetical wealth, and it is sometimes a relief to turn aside from the text to the curious and highly entertaining notes which serve to illustrate it." *Madoc*, although written in 1799, was not published until 1805. It is founded on a Welsh legend relating to the early history of America. It tells

How Madoc from the shores of Britain spread
The adventurous sail, explored the ocean paths,
And quelled barbarian powers, and overthrew
The bloody altars of idolatry,
And planted in its fanes triumphantly
The cross of Christ.

Madoc is represented as a Welsh prince who, sailing across the ocean in the twelfth century, discovered the

New World, and, after having conquered the people of Aztlan, converted the natives to Christianity. Some of the scenes in the poem are finely executed, but the events narrated are unpardonably extravagant, and there is a repellant dullness about the entire performance. *The Curse of Kehama* appeared in 1810. It consists of twenty-four parts, and is written in an irregular metre similar to that of *Thalaba*. It is a story founded upon the Hindoo mythology, and includes among its *dramatis personæ* the principal deities, the Suras, or good spirits, the Asuras, or evil spirits, and the Glendoveers. "There are many passages of gorgeous description," says Shaw, "and many proofs of powerful fancy and imagination; but the persons and adventures are so supernatural, so completely out of the circle of human sympathies, both in their triumphs and sufferings, and they are so scrupulously divested of all the passions and circumstances of humanity, that this gorgeous and ambitious work produces on us the impression of a splendid but unsubstantial nightmare." *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*, is the title of Southey's fifth attempt at epic poetry. It is less ambitious than its predecessors, its recitals are not so extravagant, its language possesses greater vigor, but, like all the others, it is deficient in subjects of ordinary human interest. Its hero is Roderick, the last Gothic king of Spain, and the story is based upon half-mythical legends relating to that monarch and the times in which he lived. John Dennis says of Southey: "The most ambitious and the most voluminous author of his age, he was also one of the least popular; and time, instead of changing the national verdict, as he anticipated, has confirmed it. His vast epics, the acorns which he planted when his poetical contemporaries, as he said, were sowing kidney-beans, are not the trees whose majestic proportions win our admiration, or to whose shade we willingly resort. Failure is written upon a large portion of Southey's works."

Gebir, by Walter Savage Landor, may be mentioned here as resembling, in some respects, the so-called epics of

Southey. The story was derived from a collection of Arabian tales by Clara Reeve, and relates to the mythical founder of Gibraltar. Lord Houghton gives the following description of this epic: "It has no interest of plot, and no delicate discrimination of character. Two brothers, representatives of the militant and peaceful natures, are each, after the ancient manner, assisted by sympathetic supernatural agencies, and display the old moralities of the barrenness of conquest and the omnipotence of love. There is the Virgilian descent to the world of future destiny, with its ancestral and heroic shapes of doom, allegorizing, among other objects of his reprobation, not only George the Third, 'with eyebrows white and slanting brow,' and Louis Seize, who 'shrinks yelling from that sword there engine-hung,' but 'William, miscalled Deliverer,' contrasted curiously with a vision, in another part, of Bonaparte as 'a mortal man above all mortal praise,' but these are the only disturbances of the general unity and consistency of the poem. The happy issue of the pastoral affection of Tamar, and the disastrous close of that of Gebir, afford occasion for an accumulated wealth of imagery which wants but some human relation to raise itself to the utmost heights of epic grandeur; and there are other salient passages which we hear without wonder that Shelley was never tired of reciting, and which Coleridge could describe as 'eminences as excessively bright as the ground was dark around and between them.'"

The name heroic poetry is applied to a lower order of epic composition, of which several examples exist in English literature. Like the higher forms of epic poetry, it is serious and dignified in tone, and the interest centres around the fortunes of a particular hero. But there is not that diversity of action which is found in the greater poem, neither does it admit of the same complexity of treatment. *The Bruce*, written by John Barbour about 1376, may be mentioned among the heroic poems of our language, although the strictness with which the author

adheres to the facts of history would justify us in including it also with the poems called historical. It consists of about 14,000 octo-syllabic lines, and is written in rhyming couplets, like the Trouvère romances of the same period. It possesses much real poetic merit; its hero is the celebrated Robert Bruce, of Scotland; and to it, as we have already learned, Sir Walter Scott was largely indebted for his romantic poem, the *Lord of the Isles*. To give the reader some notion of Barbour's style, we copy the following lines: on Freedom:

A! fredome is a noble thinge!
 Fredome mayss man to have liking:
 Fredome all solace to man givés;
 He livys at ease, that freely livys!
 A noble hart may have none ease,
 Na ellys nocht that may him please,
 Gif fredome failythe; for fre liking
 Is yharnt ower all other thing.
 Na he, that aye has livyt fre,
 May nocht knaw weill the propyrté;
 The angyr, na the wrechyt dome,
 That is couplyt to foul thyrdome.
 Bot gif he had assayit it,
 Then all perquer he suld it wyt;
 And suld think fredome mar to pryss,
 Than all the gold in warld that is.

It is not necessary to an heroic poem that the hero should have been a real living personage. Sir William Davenant's *Gondibert*, printed in 1651, although intended by its author as an epic, may be mentioned in this class. This work, of which only the first half was completed, is very long and dull, although it contains some passages of real beauty. It is written in the peculiar four-lined stanza of alternate rhymes of which Davenant was the inventor, and narrates a long series of romantic adventures of which Gondibert, an Italian prince, is the hero. The first book relates how

Prince Oswald and Duke Gondibert, contending for the hand of the lady Rhodalind, met at last in a mortal combat in which Oswald was slain. The second book describes the adventures of Gondibert in the house of Astragon the Wise, and the manner in which he fell in love with BIRTHA, the daughter of that philosopher. The small fragment which we have of the third book continues the account of the intrigue by which the hero endeavored to transfer his plighted allegiance from Rhodalind to BIRTHA. The following extract will suffice as a specimen of the versification of this poem:

He who does blindly soar at Rhodalind,
Mounts like seeld Doves, still higher from his ease;
And in the lust of empire he may finde,
High hope does better than fruition please.

The victor's solid recompence is rest:
And 'tis unjust that chiefs who pleasure shunn,
Toying in youth, should be in age opprest
With greater toyles, by ruling what they won

Here all reward of conquest I would finde;
Leave shining thrones for BIRTHA in the shade;
With Nature's quiet wonders fill my minde,
And praise her most because she BIRTHA made.

But few modern critics will agree with the philosopher Hobbes in the opinion that *Gondibert* deserves to last longer than the *Iliad* or the *Aeneid*. Hallam says: "*Gondibert* is written in a clear, nervous English style; its condensation produces some obscurity, but pedantry, at least that of language, will rarely be found in it; and Davenant is less infected by the love of conceit and of extravagance than his contemporaries, though I would not assert that he is wholly exempt from the former blemish. But the chief praise of *Gondibert* is for masculine verse in a good metrical cadence; for the sake of which we may forgive the absence of interest in the story, and even of those glowing words and breath-

ing thoughts which are the soul of genuine poetry. *Gondibert* is very little read."

We shall close this chapter on epic and heroic poetry with a brief notice of a single specimen of the mock-heroic, or the burlesque epic. The finest example of this kind of poetry is *The Rape of the Lock*, written by Alexander Pope, and published in 1711. The occasion of this poem was a frolic of gallantry in which Lord Petre cut off a lock of hair from the head of Arabella Fermor, a maid of honor at the court of Queen Anne. The incident occasioned a quarrel between the two families, and it being suggested to Pope that he might, by the aid of his poetry, bring about a reconciliation, he immediately set to work to accomplish that object. The result was the *Rape of the Lock*. This poem consists of five short cantos, and is in reality nothing more than a pleasant satire on the follies of fashionable life. Canto I. opens with a high-sounding invocation, probably intended as a parody upon the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*. Then the poet "hastens into the midst of things" by describing the counsels given by Ariel, in a dream, to Belinda. Belinda's toilet is described. Canto II. tells about the sacrifice offered by "the adventurous baron," who

To Love an altar built,
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves;
With tender billets-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three amorous sighs to raise the fire.

The poem then goes on to tell how Belinda goes upon the water, and how the Sylphs, sitting in solemn council, are varned of danger by Ariel. In Canto III. the party repair to Hampton Court,

Where thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea!

There the party play a game of Ombre, which is described in the manner of a tournament. At the close of this game the great catastrophe occurs—the peer, with fatal scissors, dissevers the sacred hair

From the fair head, forever, and forever!

Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend the affrighted skies;
Not louder shrieks to pitying Heaven are cast,
When husbands, or when lap-dogs, breathe their last;
Or when rich China vessels, fallen from high,
In glittering dust and painted fragments lie!

In the fourth canto we visit the abode of Spleen and become acquainted with the Gnomes. Belinda commissions Sir Plume to demand the return of the stolen lock, which the peer politely refuses. Canto V. describes a metaphorical combat between the beaux and the belles, in which many perish by the frowns and cruel glances of their opponents. But, in the midst of the fray, the lock is snatched up to heaven,—

A sudden star, it shot through liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's locks first rose so bright,
The heavens bespangling with dishevelled light.
The sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
And pleased, pursue its progress through the skies.

The idea of the sylphs was suggested to Pope by a French book called *The Count de Gabalis*, "which both in its title and size is so like a novel, that many of the fair sex have read it for one by mistake."

Mr. Lowell writes thus of the poem: "We must allow that the man who can produce one perfect work is either a great genius or a very lucky one; and so far as we who read are concerned, it is of secondary importance which. And Pope has done this in the *Rape of the Lock*. For wit,

fancy, invention, and keeping, it has never been surpassed. I do not say there is in it poetry of the highest order, or that Pope is a poet whom any one would choose as the companion of his best hours. There is no inspiration in it, no trumpet-call, but for pure entertainment it is unmatched."

REFERENCES.

In connection with the general subject of epic poetry the student should acquaint himself with the great epics of classical literature, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Æneid*. Also with the more modern poems, the *Divina Commedia*, the *Jerusalem Delivered*, and *Orlando Furioso*. Of these we shall speak more fully under the head of Translations (see Chapter XII).

The student of *Paradise Lost* is referred to the following for criticisms: *The Spectator*; the numbers issued on Saturdays from January 5 to May 3, 1712.

Johnson's *Life of Milton*.

Coleridge. *Literary Remains*.

Hallam's *Literature of Europe*.

Masson's *Introduction to Milton's Poetical Works*.

Masson's *Life of Milton*.

Himes. *A Study of Paradise Lost*.

Brooke. *Milton (Classical Writers Primer)*.

Pattison. *Milton (English Men of Letters)*.

Leigh Hunt. *Imagination and Fancy*.

Macaulay's *Essay on Milton*.

Hazlitt's *English Poets: Shakspeare and Milton*.

Hazlitt. *On Milton's Eve*.

MacDonald's *England's Antiphon*.

De Quincey. *Milton vs. Southey and Landor*.

Taine's *English Literature*.

Johnson's *Rambler*. (A series of papers on Milton's versification.)

The following are the best editions of the poems:

Mitford. *The Works and Life of John Milton*. (8 vols., London, 1851.)

Paradise Lost. (Edited, with notes, by Prof. Torrey, of Harvard. Boston.)

Complete Poetical Works of John Milton. (New York.)

Poetical Works of John Milton. (Household Edition. London and New York.)

Boyd's *Milton*. (Copious notes. New York.)

Milton's Poetical Works. (Edited by David Masson. London, 1874.)

Milton's Poetical Works. (Edited by C. D. Cleveland, with a verbal index. Philadelphia, 1853.)

Milton's Poetical Works. (Edited by W. M. Rosetti, with Memoir. New York, 1871.)

COLLATERAL READING.

THE student should study carefully the history of the period (1608-74). The histories of Hume, Lingard, and Knight relating to this time will form the basis for a more extended course of reading.

Green's *History of the English People*. Vol. III.

Gardiner, S. R. *The Puritan Revolution*.

Carlyle's *Oliver Cromwell*.

Russell's *Life of Oliver Cromwell*.

Masson's *Life of John Milton*.

Burnett's *History of My Own Times*.

Evelyn's *Diary and Correspondence*.

Pepys's *Diary and Correspondence*.

Jesse's *Court of the Stuarts*.

Macaulay's *Essays on Milton*, and on *Cowley and Milton*.

In order to a thorough understanding of *Paradise Lost*, he should have a good knowledge of classical mythology. The following works are recommended for reference :

Smith's *Classical Dictionary*.

Dwight's *Grecian Mythology*.

Murray's *Mythology*.

CHAPTER IX.

LYRICAL POETRY.

Definitions—Classification—Ballads—Ballads of Robin Hood—The Ballad of Chevy Chase—Scotch Ballads—Waly, Waly!—The Braes of Yarrow—Noteworthy Collections of Ballads—Hymns and Religious Poems—Hymns not always Poetry—George Herbert's Temple—Crashaw's Steps to the Temple—Henry Vaughan—Milton's Hymn on the Nativity—A Christmas Hymn, by Alfred Dommet—Christ's Victory and Triumph, by Giles Fletcher—The Hymns of Dr. Isaac Watts—Pope's Messiah, Dying Christian, and Universal Prayer—Charles Wesley—Moore's Sacred Songs—Byron's Hebrew Melodies—Henry Hart Milman's Hymns for Church Service—John Keble—The Christian Year—Love-Lyrics—The Songs of the Troubadours—The Sonnet—Wyatt, Spenser, Sidney, Shakspeare, Drayton, Drummond, Milton, Wordsworth—Mrs. Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese—Wyatt's Love-Songs—Marlowe's Passionate Shepherd—The Nymph's Reply, by Raleigh—England's Helicon—Sir John Suckling—Robert Herrick—The Mistress, by Cowley—The Love-Lyrics of Robert Burns—A Fond Kiss and then We Part—Moore's Love-Lyrics—Genevieve, and Love, by Coleridge—Songs of Patriotism—Rule Britannia!—Smollett's Poems—Scott on Patriotism—Burns—Scots Wha hae wi' Wallace Bled—James Hogg—Moore's Irish Melodies—Ye Mariners of England—Gray's Bard—Byron and Shelley—American Patriotism—Montgomery and Goldsmith on Patriotism—Battle-Songs—Laurence Minot—Scott's Battle-Scenes—Macaulay—Tennyson and Drayton—Odes—Dryden and Pope on St. Cecilia's Day—Other Famous Odes—Elegies—Spenser's Astrophel—Milton's Lycidas—Shelley's Adonais—Tennyson's In Memoriam—Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington—Gray's Elegy—Pope's Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady—The Dirge in Cymbeline—Collins's Dirge in Cymbeline—Other Elegies—Miscellaneous Lyrics—Drummond's Poems—Ramsay—Fergusson—Burns—William Blake—Songs of Innocence—Whittier—Swinburne.

LYRICAL poetry, strictly defined, is that which is written to be sung to the accompaniment of music. In its broadest signification, however, it includes a large number of compositions which have never been set to music. It is the

glowing utterance of passion aided by fancy and the imagination. It is true poetry. It is the means by which we give vent to our most ecstatic thoughts of happiness, and to our feelings of devotion to the Creator, to our country, to our friends, or to whatsoever is true and beautiful in nature. It is that form of poetry which appears earliest in a nation's literature, being the spontaneous expression of the feelings of the surcharged human soul.

Lyrical poems are usually short, but by reason of their great number they constitute no inconsiderable portion of the bulk of English poetry. For the sake of convenience in treatment we shall classify them as follows:

1. The Early Ballads.
2. Religious Songs and Hymns.
3. Love-Songs.
4. Songs of Patriotism.
5. Battle-Songs.
6. Odes.
7. Elegies.
8. Miscellaneous Lyrics.

1. *The Early Ballads*.—The ballads were originally the production of wandering minstrels or gleemen, a class of men very popular in the Middle Ages, who followed the profession of poetry and music. These rude poets were held in the highest esteem and veneration by the people among whom they lived, they were received and welcomed wherever they went, and even kings delighted to honor them. In short, their art was supposed, by the Anglo-Saxons, to be of divine origin, having been invented by Odin, the great All-Father, and perfected by Bragi, the musician of the gods. As, however, civilization advanced and Christianity became established, this admiration for the minstrel and his art became modified in a degree. He was no longer regarded as a poet, but only as a singer, a sweet musician. Poetry was cultivated by men of leisure and refinement; but lyrical ballads remained the peculiar

inheritance of the minstrel. For a long time after the Norman conquest, minstrels continued to gain their livelihood by singing in the houses of the great, and at festive occasions, which were never considered complete unless graced by the presence of these honored descendants of Bragi; nor did they cease to compose and sing their inimitable pieces until near the close of Elizabeth's reign. The greater number of the ballads now in existence were probably produced during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; and the best of them originated in the "North Country," or the Border region between England and Scotland. They were not at first reduced to writing, but were handed down from one generation to another merely by oral tradition. As regards their metre and versification, the ballads were commonly composed of iambic hexameters or heptameters rhyming in couplets. These couplets are readily broken into stanzas of four lines, in which form they are usually printed. These poems abound in antique words and phrases, and exhibit a natural carelessness in the use of language as well as in the construction of the verse.

Among the earliest and most popular of English ballads are those relating to Robin Hood. This noted, half-mythical outlaw was the impersonation of popular rights as they were understood by Englishmen of the lower orders in the days of the Plantagenets. Hence the memory of him and his reputed deeds was preserved in the songs of the people. "It is he," says an old historian, "whom the common people love so dearly to celebrate in games and comedies, and whose history, sung by fiddlers, interests them more than any other." Even so late as the reign of Edward VI., "Robyn Hoode's Daye" was very generally observed in the country parishes as a day of feasting and amusement. The tradition which preserves his name and deeds relates that he lived in the reign of Henry II., and that, being outlawed for debt, he dwelt in the forest, subsisting on the king's game and on such plunder as

he could take from the nobility who came in his way. He finally had command of a company of a hundred archers, equal in strength and valor to any four hundred men who might be brought against them. Chief among his friends and companions were Little John, George à Green Pinder, Friar Tuck, and Much, the miller's son. "Poore men's goods he spared, abundantlie relieving with that which by theft he got from abbeyes and the houses of rich earles; . . . and of all theeves he was the prince and the most gentle thief."* The following stanzas, selected from one of the best known of the *Robin Hood Ballads*, will serve as an illustration of the style and character of these early popular songs:

When shawes beene sheene, and shrads full fayre,
And leaves both large and longe,
Itt is merrye walkyng in the fayre forest,
To heare the small birdes songe.

The woodweele sang, and wold not cease,
Sitting upon the spraye,
Soe lowde, he wakened Robin Hood,
In the greenwood where he lay.

"Now, by my faye," sayd jollie Robin,
"A sweaven I had this night;
I dreamt me of tow wighty yemen,
That fast with me can fight.

"Methought they did mee beate and binde,
And tooke my bow mee froe;
Iff I be Robin alive in this lande,
Ile be wroken on them towe."

Little John, to whom this speech is directed, offers to go with the outlaw in search of these yeomen, but Robin Hood repels the proffered kindness with anger.

* Stow's *Annals*.

"It is no cunning a kuave to ken,
And a man but heare him speake;
And itt were not for bursting of my bowe,
John, I thy head wold breake!"

As often wordes they breeden bale,
So they parted, Robin and John;
And John is gone to Barnesdale;
The gates he knoweth eche one.

Robin goes alone in another direction, and meets a
woman, Guy of Gisborne, in the wood.

"Good morrowe, good fellowe," sayd Robin so fayre,
"Good morrowe, good fellowe," quoth he.
"Methinks by this bowe thou bears in hande,
A good archere thou sholdst bee."

* * * * *
"I seeke an outláwe," the straunger sayd,
"Men call him Robin Hood;
Rather I'd meet with that proud outláwe
Than fortye pound soe good."

Robin Hood offers to show him the outlaw whom he
seeks, but first challenges him to a trial of skill in archery.
Robin is the victor in this friendly contest, and Guy,
admiring his skill, asks his name.

"Nay, by my faith," quoth holde Robin,
"Till thou have told me thine."

"I dwell by dale and downe," quoth hee,
"And Robin to take I me sworne;
And when I am called by my right name,
I am Guy of good Gisbórne."

"My dwelling is in this wood," sayes Robin,
"By thee I set right nought:
I am Robin Hood, of Barnésdale,
Whom thou so long hast sought."

He that hath neither beene kithe nor kin,
 Might have seen a full fayre sight
 To see how together these yeomen went
 With blades both browne and bright.

To see how these yeomen together they fought
 Two howres of a summer's day,
 Yett neither Robin Hood nor Sir Guy
 Them fettled to flye away.

At length Robin, obtaining the advantage, slew his
 opponent, and said :

"Lye there, lye there now, Sir Guy,
 And with me be not wrothe;
 Iff thou have had the worst strokes at my hand,
 Thou shalt have the better clothe."

Chief among the ballads of the border-land is that of *Chevy-Chase*, of which Sir Philip Sidney wrote: "Certainly I must confess mine own barbarousness, I never heard the old song of *Percy and Douglas*, that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet: and yet it is sung but by som blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude stile; which being so evil apparelled in the dust and cob-webs of that uncivil age, what would it work, trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?"* This ballad was probably composed as early as the time of Henry VI., if not earlier. We have room for only a few stanzas:

The Persé out off Northombarlande,
 And a vowe to God mayd he,
 That he wold hunte in the mountayns
 Off Chyviat within dayes thre,
 In the mauger of doughté Dogles,
 And all that ever with him be.

While performing his vow and hunting in the woods of Cheviot, Percy, with his "fifteen hondrith archares bold,"

* *Defense of Poesie*. Edition of 1674. p. 553.

is met by the doughty Douglas, who had "with him a myghte meany."

The wear twenty hondrith spear-men good,
 Withouten any fayle;
 The wear borne a-long be the watter a Twyde,
 Yth, bowndes of Tividale.

"Leave off the brytlyng of the dear," he sayde,
 "And to your bowys tayk good heed;
 For never sithe ye wear on your mothars borne
 Had ye never so mickle need."

In the fight which follows, Douglas is slain.

With that ther cam an arrowe hastily,
 Forthe off a mightie wane;
 Hit hathe strekene the Yerle Duglas
 In at the brest bane.

Thorou lyvar and longs bathe
 The sharp arrowe ys gane,
 That never after in all his lyffe-days
 He spake no wordes but ane:
 That was, "Fyghte ye, my merry men, whylls ye may,
 For my lyff-days ben gan."

Then a Scottish knight, called "Sir Hewe the Mongonbyrry," having seen the death of Douglas,

He set uppone the Lord Persè
 A dynte that was full soare;
 With a suar spear of a myghtè tre
 Clean thorow the body he the Persè bore.

* * * * *
 Towe bettar captayns wear nat in Chistianè,
 Then that day slain wear thare.

The battle, which began before noon, was continued through the day:

And when even-song bell was rang,
The battell was not half done.

The fight was continued by moonlight, until

Of fifteen hondrith archers of Ynglonde
Went away but fifti and thre;
Of twenty hondrith spear-men of Skotlonde
But even five and fifti.

* * * * *
Jhesue Crist our balys bete,
And to the blys us brynge!
Thus was the hountyng of the Chevyat:
God send us all good ending!

Several later versions of this heroic ballad are in existence, and as they are written in a more pleasing style and are more easily understood, they will prove more attractive to the general reader. Nevertheless, the ancient version from which our extracts have been taken excels the more modern in vividness and accuracy of description.

A very large number of the finest ballads are of distinctively Scotch origin; and in Scotland we know the minstrels or bards survived to a much later period than in England. We can do little more than give the titles of a few of these: *The Auld Good-Man*, a very ancient ballad; *Gil Morrice*; the pathetic ballad of *Lady Bothwell's Lament*; the historical ballad of *Sir Patrick Spens*; *Edom O'Gordon*; *Waly, Waly, Love be Bonny*.

O waly, waly up the bank,
And waly, waly down the brae,
And waly, waly yon burn side,
Where I and my love wer wont to gae.
I leant my back unto an aik,
I thought it was a trusty tree;
But first it bow'd, and syne it brak,
Sae my true love did lichtly me.

The best modern imitation of the ancient Scotch ballad is the *Braes of Yarrow*, written by William Hamilton about 1750. We copy the opening stanzas:

A. "Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny bride,
 Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome marrow;
 Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny bride,
 And think nae mair on the Braes of Yarrow."

B. "Where gat ye that bonny, bonny bride?
 Where gat ye that winsome marrow?"

A. "I gat her where I dare na weil be seen
 Puing the birks on the Braes of Yarrow."

"Weep not, weep not, my bonny, bonny bride,
 Weep not, weep not, my winsome marrow;
 Nor let thy heart lament to leive
 Puing the birks on the Braes of Yarrow."

B. "Why does she weep, thy bonny, bonny bride?
 Why does she weep, thy winsome marrow?
 And why dare ye nae maer weil be seen
 Puing the birks on the Braes of Yarrow?"

A. "Lang maun she weep, lang maun she, maun she weep,
 Lang maun she weep with dule and sorrow;
 And lang maun I nae mair weil be seen
 Puing the birks on the Braes of Yarrow."

"Most of our English ballads," says Prof. Lang, "are gathered from old broad-sheets and ancient manuscript collections. To say that is to say that they are dashed with the humblest literary commonplace, that they do not come straight from the heart and lips of a singing people, like the modern Greeks or Italians. They have acquired, in the hands of half-educated printers and editors, a tone which is not the tone of the people. They are almost as bald, often as Dr. Johnson declared them to be—as bald as Johnson's parody:

“ ‘I put my hat upon my head, and went into the strand,
And there I saw another man, with his hat in his hand.’ ”

The first collection of ballads ever published was probably that of John Dryden, in 1684. The collection was included in a volume entitled *Miscellany Poems*. In 1723 a work called *A Collection of Old Ballads* was published anonymously. In 1724 Allan Ramsay issued *The Evergreen*, “being a collection of Scots Poems wrote by the Ingenious before 1600.” This work included many popular songs and ballads. It was reprinted in 1875.

We owe the preservation of a large number of the most interesting and beautiful ballads to Bishop Percy, who, in 1765, published the first really valuable collection of such works in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. Previous to this time most of these songs had existed only in manuscript, or, if printed at all, in the cheapest style of typography on sheets designed for circulation among the poor. Bishop Percy’s work first called the attention of scholars to the value and beauty of these neglected and half-forgotten relics, and did more than anything else to bring about that revolution in literature which took place in the latter part of last century. And it is to these old ballads, thus rescued from oblivion, that we owe very many of the noblest literary productions of the present century. We know that they were the immediate inspiration of Sir Walter Scott, and that they exerted a wonderful influence in modifying and directing the taste and style of many other distinguished writers.

The student who desires a more intimate acquaintance with the ballad literature of England is referred particularly to Percy’s *Reliques*, and to Sir Walter Scott’s *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. He will also be interested in *English and Scotch Ballads*, a collection made by Prof. Francis J. Child in 1864, and also in W. Allingham’s *The Ballad Book* (London, 1864). Besides these works, the following collections are also worthy of mention: *A Collection of*

Scottish Songs, by David Herd (1772), which Sir Walter Scott describes as the first classical collection of the kind ever made; *English Songs* (1783); *Ancient Songs* (1790); *Ancient Popular Poetry* (1791); *Robin Hood Poems* (1795), by Joseph Ritson; *Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern* (1827), by William Motherwell; *Popular Ballads and Songs, from Tradition, Manuscripts, and Scarce Editions*, by Robert Jamieson (1806).

The influence of ballads upon the early history of a people is well expressed in the saying of one Andrew Fletcher in a letter written to the Marquis of Montrose: "I knew a very wise man that believed that, if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation."

2. *Religious Songs and Hymns*.—We have already learned that the first poetry written in England was of a religious character. It is, indeed, possible that devotional songs and hymns existed in the English, or, rather, Anglo-Saxon language, at a date prior to that of Cædmon; but, if such were the case, none of them, so far as we know, have been preserved. In the chapter on Anglo-Saxon poetry we have already referred to the songs of Aldhelm and other hymn-writers of that time. M. Taine thus speaks of these earliest writers of devotional songs: "Some one has said that the first and most sincere hymn is this one word, O! Theirs were hardly longer; they only repeated, time after time, some deep, passionate word, with monotonous vehemence." The same is true, to a considerable extent, with reference to very much of the devotional literature of more modern times. A single thought is expressed a thousand different times; it is only in the manner of expression that we find variety. Sometimes this expression is truly poetical, but often it is no more than a vehement repetition of words with perhaps only those mechanical qualities of poetry—rhyme and metre.

"How few hymns are worthy of the name of poems!" says Prof. Hales. "The cause of this frequent failure is

probably to be looked for in the writer's relation to his subject. It is not, and cannot be, one of sufficient freedom. His mind is in a sense subdued and fettered by the very conditions of the case. He is dealing with a certain definite interpretation of profound mysteries; and the mysteries themselves are such as to overpower and paralyze the free movement of his intelligence. How can he sing at ease? He is like one with a lesson set him, which he must reproduce as best he may. It is rather his faith and his memory that are called into action than his imagination. At all events his imagination has an inferior part assigned her; she is not to create, but rather to decorate and glorify what is created. To worship and adore and love—these are real movements and impulses of the poet's mind, and may have and have had their expression in lyrics that may be fully styled divine; but when the details of a creed are celebrated, then for the most part the sweet enthusiasm dies away out of the poet's eyes, the rapture chills and freezes, and we are reminded of the Thirty-nine Articles rather than of the Beatific Vision."

The earliest collection of sacred lyrics worthy of attention is that entitled *The Temple; or, Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*. The author of this work was George Herbert, commonly called Holy George Herbert. In his character there was a remarkable combination of the manners of a courtier, the scholarship of a philosopher, and the genuine goodness of a typical Christian. George MacDonald speaks thus of him and his poetry: "In George Herbert there is poetry, and enough to spare; it is the household bread of his existence. . . . No writer before him has shown such a love to God, such a child-like confidence in Him. The divine mind of George Herbert was, in the main, bent upon discovering God everywhere. His use of homeliest imagery for the highest thought is in itself enough to class him with the highest kind of poets. He has an exquisite feeling of lyrical art. Not only does he keep to one idea in it, but he finishes the poem like a cameo." We copy a single specimen:

How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
 Are thy returns! e'en as the flowers in spring—
 To which, besides their own demean,
 The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring.
 Grief melts away
 Like snow in May,
 As if there were no such cold thing.

Who could have thought my shriveled heart
 Could have recovered greenness? It was gone
 Quite under ground; as flowers depart
 To see their mother root when they have blown,
 Where they together
 All the hard weather,
 Dead to the world, keep house unknown.

Oh, that I once past changing were—
 Fast in thy paradise, where no flower can wither!
 Many a spring I shoot up fair,
 Offering at heaven, growing and groaning thither;
 Nor doth my flower
 Want a spring-shower,
 My sins and I joining together.

But, while I grow in a straight line,
 Still upwards bent, as if heaven were mine own,
 Thy anger comes, and I decline;
 What frost to that? what pole is not the zone
 Where all things burn,
 When thou dost turn
 And the least frown of thine is shown?

And now in age I bud again—
 After so many deaths I live and write;
 I once more smell the dew and rain,
 And relish versing; O my only light,
 It cannot be
 That I am he
 On whom thy tempests fell all night.

These are thy wonders, Lord of love—
 To make us see we are but flowers that glide;
 Which when we once can find and prove,
 Thou hast a garden for us where to bide.
 Who would be more,
 Swelling through store,
 Forfeit their paradise by their pride.

Herbert was a clergyman of the Anglican Church. Strangely resembling him in some respects, and yet so different, was Richard Crashaw, an ardent Catholic and canon of the cathedral of Loretto. In imitation of Herbert's work, he wrote a collection of sacred lyrics to which he gave the name of *Steps to the Temple*. This work was published in 1646. It was so called, says his editor, "because in the temple of God, under his wing, he led his life in St. Mary's church, near to Peter-House, Cambridge. There he lodged under Tertullian's roof of angels. There he made his rest, more gladly than David's swallow, near the house of God, where, like a primitive saint, he offered more prayers in the night than others usually offer in the day. There he penned the said poems for happy souls to climb to heaven by." But the author himself, in dedicating the book to a fair lady, thus acknowledges his indebtedness to his predecessor:

And though Herbert's name do owe
 These devotions, fairest, know
 That while I lay them on the shrine
 Of your white hand, they are mine.

His poems often possess great beauty, but they are marred by their author's tendency to admire and imitate the ecstatic writings of St. Theresa. Hallam says: "It is difficult, in general, to find anything in Crashaw that bad taste has not deformed."

Henry Vaughan, a disciple of Herbert, published, in 1650, a volume of poems entitled *Silex Scintillans*; or,

Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations. He afterwards published several other collections of a similar character. If Herbert was a saint and Crashaw a devotee, we may characterize Vaughan as a mystic. "His art," says MacDonald, "is not comparable to that of Herbert. He is careless and somewhat rugged. If he can get his thought dressed, and thus made visible, he does not mind the dress fitting awkwardly, or even being a little out of elbows. And yet he has grander lines and phrases than any in Herbert. He has occasionally a daring success that strikes one with astonishment. In a word, he says more splendid things than Herbert, though he writes inferior poems. His movements are sometimes grand, sometimes awkward. Herbert is always gracious." Campbell says: "He has some scattered thoughts that meet our eyes amid his harsh pages, like wild flowers on a barren heath." Simcox says: "The sanctity and insight of childhood are more to him than even to Wordsworth. Many religious writers speak of this life as an exile, Vaughan carries the metaphor through; we are exiles, not only from the home we seek, but from the home we left. He even suspects the stars may have something to do with the uncompensated misfortune of birth into a world of time and sense." The following poem will illustrate. Compare it with the opening lines in Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*.

Happy those early days when I
 Shin'd in my angel infancy!
 Before I understood this place
 Appointed for my second race,
 Or taught my soul to fancy ought
 But a white, celestial thought;
 When yet I had not walk'd above
 A mile or two, from my first love,
 And looking back—at that short space—
 Could see a glimpse of His bright face;
 When on some gilded cloud or flower
 My gazing soul would dwell an hour,

And in those weaker glories spy
 Some shadows of eternity ;
 Before I taught my tongue to wound
 My conscience with a sinful sound,
 Or had the black art to dispense,
 A sev'ral sin to ev'ry sense,
 But felt through all this fleshly dress
 Bright shoots of everlastingness.

Oh, how I long to travel back,
 And tread again that ancient track !
 That I might once more reach that plain,
 Where first I left my glorious train ;
 From whence th' enlighten'd spirit sees
 That shady city of palm-trees.
 But ah ! my soul with too much stay
 Is drunk, and staggers in the way !
 Some men a forward motion love,
 But I my backward steps will move ;
 And when this dust falls to the urn,
 In that state I came, return.

The following stanzas contain some exceedingly beautiful thoughts, however harshly they may be expressed :

He that hath found some fledg'd birds' nest, may know
 At first sight, if the bird be flown ;
 But what fair well or grove he sings in now,
 That is to him unknown.

And yet as angels in some brighter dreams
 Call to the soul, when man doth sleep ;
 So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,
 And into glory peep.

If a star were confin'd into a tomb,
 The captive flames must needs burn there ;
 But when the hand that lock'd her up, gives room,
 She'll shine through all the sphere.

Perhaps the finest sacred lyric in the language is Milton's
Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity, written in 1629.

It possesses a rare combination of grandeur and simplicity, of beautiful imagery and fantastic conceits, of clear, flowing melody, and vigorous, sometimes rugged, versification. We copy the opening stanzas :

It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies ; .
Nature, in awe of him,
Had doffed her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize :
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air,
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow ;
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw :
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

But he, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-ey'd Peace ;
She, crown'd with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing ;
And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

No war nor battle-sound
Was heard the world around ;
The idle spear and shield were high uphung ;
The hookèd chariot stood
Unstain'd with hostile blood ;
The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng :
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sov'reign Lord was by.

And this is the concluding stanza :

But see, the Virgin blest
 Hath laid her babe to rest ;
 Time is our tedious song should here have ending :
 Heaven's youngest-teamed star
 Hath fix'd her polish'd car,
 Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending ;
 And all about the courtly stable
 Bright harness'd angels sit, in order serviceable.

The student will by no means omit the careful study of this poem entire. Hallam speaks of it thus : "The *Ode on the Nativity* is perhaps the finest in the English language. A grandeur, a simplicity, a breadth of manner, an imagination at once elevated and restrained by the subject, reign throughout it. If Pindar is a model of lyric poetry, it would be hard to name any other ode so truly Pindaric ; but more has naturally been derived from the Scriptures."

Although such a comparison may seem almost irreverent, we copy a single stanza of an imitation of Milton's hymn, written by Alfred Dommet, in 1811, entitled a *Christmas Hymn* :

It was the calm and silent night !
 Seven hundred years and fifty-three
 Had Rome been growing up to night,
 And now was queen of land and sea.
 No sound was heard of clashing arms,
 Peace brooded o'er the hushed domain :
 Apollo, Pallas, Jove, and Mars
 Held undisturb'd their ancient reign,
 In the solemn midnight
 Centuries ago.

Christ's Victory and Triumph is the title of a sacred poem written by Giles Fletcher about 1610. It is not strictly a lyric, but we mention it here in connection with other religious poems. There is in many passages of the poem a true lyrical sweetness and beauty, while in others there

is a deep earnestness and massive grandeur which appeals most powerfully to the imagination. The student may compare his description of the Bower of Vain Delight with Spenser's Bower of Bliss, and then with Thomson's Castle of Indolence :

The garden like a lady fair was cut,
That lay as if she slumber'd in delight,
And to the open skies her eyes did shut :
The azure fields of heaven were 'sembled right
In a large round, set with the flowers of light :
The flowers-de-luce, and the round sparks of dew
That hung upon their azure leaves, did shew
Like twinkling stars, that sparkle in the evening blue.

Upon a hilly bank her head she cast,
On which the bower of Vain Delight was built.
White and red roses for her face were plac'd,
And for her tresses marigolds were spilt :
Them broadly she display'd, like flaming gilt,
Till in the ocean the glad day was drown'd :
Then up again her yellow locks she wound,
And with green fillets in their pretty cauls them bound.

What should I here depaint her lily hand,
Her veins of violets, her ermine breast,
Which there in Orient colors living stand ;
Or how her gown with silken leaves is drest,
Or how her watchman, arm'd with boughy crest,
A wall of prim hid in his bushes bears
Shaking at every wind their leafy spears, .
While she supinely sleeps, nor to be waked fears.

Over the hedge depends the graping elm,
Whose greener head, empurpuled in wine,
Seemed to wonder at his bloody helm,
And half suspect the bunches of the vine,
Lest they, perhaps, his wit should undermine ;
For well he knew such fruit he never bore :

But her weak arms embraced him the more,
And she with ruby grapes laugh'd at her paramour.

* * * * *

The roof thick clouds did paint, from which three boys,
Three gaping mermaids with their ew'rs did feed,
Whose breasts let fall the stream, with sleepy noise,
To lions' mouths, from whence it leap'd with speed;
And in the rosy laver seem'd to bleed;
The naked boys unto the water's fall
Their stony nightingales had taught to call,
When Zephyr breath'd into their watery interall.

And all about, embayed in soft sleep,
A herd of charmed beasts aground were spread,
Which the fair witch in golden chains did keep,
And them in willing bondage fettered:
Once men they liv'd, but now the men were dead,
And turn'd to beasts; so fabled Homer old,
That Circe with her potion, charm'd in gold,
Used manly souls in beastly bodies to immould.

* * * * *

High over all, Panglorie's blazing throne,
In her bright turret, all of crystal wrought,
Like Phœbus' lamp, in midst of heaven, shone;
Whose starry top, with pride infernal fraught,
Self-arching columns to uphold were taught,
In which her image still reflected was
By the smooth crystal, that, most like her glass
In beauty and in frailty did all others pass.

A silver wand the sorceress did sway,
And, for a crown of gold, her hair she wore;
Only a garland of rose-buds did play
About her locks, and in her hand she bore
A hollow globe of glass, that long before
She full of emptiness had bladdered
And all the world therein depicted;
Whose colors, like the rainbow, ever vanished.

Such watery orbicles young boys do blow
 Out from their soapy shells, and much admire
 The swimming world, which tenderly they row
 With easy breath till it be raised higher ;
 But if they chance but roughly once aspire,
 The painted bubble instantly doth fall.
 Here when she came she 'gan for music call,
 And sung this wooing song to welcome him withal :

“ Love is the blossom where there blows
 Everything that lives or grows :
 Love doth make the heavens to move
 And the sun doth burn in love ;
 Like the strong and weak doth yoke,
 And makes the ivy climb the oak ;
 Under whose shadows lions wild
 Soften'd by love grow tame and mild :
 Love no medicine can appease,
 He burns the fishes in the seas ;
 Not all the skill his wounds can stench,
 Not all the sea his fire can quench ;
 Love did make the bloody spear
 Once a leafy coat to wear,
 While in his leaves there shrouded lay
 Sweet birds, for love, that sing and play :
 And of all love's joyful flame
 I the bud and blossom am.

Only bend thy knee to me,
 Thy wooing shall thy winning be !”

• Campbell, in his *Specimens of the English Poets*, says :
 “ Giles Fletcher, inferior as he is to Spenser and Milton,
 might be figured, in his happiest moments, as a link of
 connection in our poetry between these congenial spirits,
 for he reminds us of both, and evidently gave hints to
 the latter in a poem on the same subject with *Paradise
 Regained*.”

Everybody knows the *Hymns* of Dr. Isaac Watts. His
Psalms and Hymns, published between the years 1706 and

1719, contain some of the most popular specimens of devotional songs in the English language. No church collection, at the present time, is complete without several of these hymns. And yet, judged from a poetical standpoint, they possess but little literary merit. They belong to that class of compositions which may be said to contain more religion than poetry. The mere mention of some of the titles will recall entire hymns to the memory of the reader:

“Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?”

“Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove!”

“God is the refuge of his saints.”

“There is a land of pure delight.”

Alexander Pope was the author of two or three very excellent sacred lyrics. His *Messiah* is written in imitation of Virgil's *Pollio*, but falls far below its model. *The Dying Christian to his Soul* was written at the request of Steele, and is mainly an imitation of a Latin poem by Hadrian, with some thoughts borrowed from a fragment of Sappho. Warton found a close resemblance between this ode and one written by a certain Thomas Flatman, half a century earlier. For the words of a dying man, we confess, the performance certainly seems to have a very artificial and affected tone:

Vital spark of heavenly flame,
Quit, oh! quit this mortal frame;
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
Oh the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

The Universal Prayer, written in 1738, is better; but it, too, carries with it that suffocating sense of restraint imposed by the rules of so-called correctness. It is intended as a kind of paraphrase of the *Lord's Prayer*. The tenth stanza is, perhaps, the best and the best known:

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

The most voluminous and, next to Watts, the most popular writer of hymns was Charles Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism. Between the years 1746 and 1781 he published no fewer than eighteen volumes of collections of sacred melodies, most of which were composed by himself. Many of his hymns are considered among the best in the language, and are still in constant use by all denominations of Protestants.

Among the most beautiful and truly poetic specimens of religious lyrics are the *Sacred Songs* of Thomas Moore, written in 1816. They are songs written by a master-hand, and although the author occasionally fails fully to maintain the lofty religious tone which his subjects require, they yet exhibit a polish and a poetical finish not found in the more popular collections. Compare the following selection with the one we have given from Herbert:

The bird let loose in Eastern skies,
When hast'ning fondly home,
Ne'er stoops to earth her wing, nor flies
Where idle warblers roam.
But high she shoots through air and light,
Above all low delay,
Where nothing earthly bounds her flight,
Nor shadow dims her way.

So grant me, God, from every care
And stain of passion free,
Aloft, through Virtue's purer air,
To hold my course to Thee!
No sin to cloud, no lure to stay
My soul, as home she springs;—
Thy sunshine on her joyful way,
Thy freedom in her wings!

Of a similar character, but of inferior poetical merit, are the *Hebrew Melodies* of Lord Byron, published a year earlier. The student may compare the two following selections, the first taken from the *Song of Jephtha's Daughter*, by Byron; the second from *Miriam's Song*, by Moore.

[*From Jephtha's Daughter.*]

Since our country, our God—O, my sire!
Demand that thy daughter expire;
Since thy triumph was bought by thy vow—
Strike the bosom that's bared for thee now.

And the voice of my mourning is o'er,
And the mountains behold me no more:
If the hand that I love lay me low,
There cannot be pain in the blow.

When this blood of thy giving hath gushed,
When the voice that thou lovest is hushed,
Let my memory still be thy pride,
And forget not I smiled as I died.

[*From Miriam's Song.*]

Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah has triumphed,—his people are free!
Sing—for the pride of the tyrant is broken,
His chariots, his horsemen, all splendid and brave—
How vain was their boasting, the Lord hath but spoken,
And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah has triumphed,—his people are free!

Henry Hart Milman, better known for his historical works, was the writer of a number of *Hymns for Church Service*, and other religious songs. His poems were published in 1840. Some of them possess great lyrical beauty and poetical merits of no mean order. We have room for but one stanza from his *Jewish Hymn in Babylon*:

God of the rainbow! at whose gracious sign
 The billows of the proud their rage suppress; '
 Father of mercies! at one word of Thine
 An Eden blooms in the waste wilderness,
 And fountains sparkle in the arid sands,
 And timbrels ring in maidens' glancing hands,
 And marble cities crown the laughing lands,
 And pillared temples rise Thy name to bless.

No hymns have ever been written which are more truly poetry than those included in *The Christian Year*, by John Keble. "Keble," says Dean Stanley, "was not merely, like Isaac Watts or Charles Wesley, a writer of hymns. He was a real poet. Their works, no doubt, have occasional flashes of poetry, but their main object is didactic, devotional, theological. Not so the *Christian Year*, the *Lyra Innocentium*, or the *Psalter*. Very few of his verses can be used in public worship. His hymns are the exception. His originality lies in the fact that whilst the subjects which he touches are for the most part consecrated by religious usage or Biblical allusion, yet he grasps them not chiefly or exclusively as a theologian or a churchman, but as a poet."

The Christian Year; or, Thoughts in Verse for the Sundays and Holidays throughout the Year, was published in 1827. It is a collection of meditative poems and religious hymns. The hymns have since been published in a separate volume. The following extract is from the poem for Palm Sunday:

But should thankless silence seal
 Lips that might half heaven reveal,
 Should bards in idle hymns profane
 The sacred, soul-enthraling strain
 (As in this bad world below
 Noblest things find vilest using),
 Then thy power and mercy show,
 In vile things noble breath infusing.

Then waken into sound divine
 The very pavement of Thy shrine,

Till we, like heaven's star-sprinkled floor,
 Faintly give back what we adore;
 Child-like though the voices be,
 And untunable the parts,
 Thou wilt own the minstrelsy
 If it flow from child-like hearts.

[*From the Hymn for the Third Sunday in Lent.*]

The olive-wreath, the ivied wand,
 "The sword in myrtle drest,"
 Each legend of the shadowy strand
 Now wakes a vision blest;
 As little children lisp, and tell of Heaven,
 So thoughts beyond their thought to those high Bards were given.

And these are ours: Thy partial grace
 The tempting treasure lends:
 These relics of a guilty race
 Are forfeit to Thy friends;
 What seemed an idle hymn, now breathes of Thee,
 Tuned by Faith's ear to some celestial melody.

There's not a strain to Memory dear,
 Nor flower in classic grove,
 There's not a sweet note warbled here,
 But minds us of Thy love,
 O Lord, our Lord, and spoiler of our foes,
 There is no light but Thine: with Thee all beauty glows

To quote again from Dean Stanley: "Keble was not a sacred, but, in the best sense of the word, a secular poet. It is not David only, but the sibyl, whose accents we catch in his inspirations. The 'sword in myrtle drest' of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, 'the many-twinkling smile of ocean,' from Æschylus, are images as familiar to him as 'Bethlehem's glade' or 'Carmel's haunted strand.' Not George Herbert or Cowper, but Wordsworth, Scott, and perhaps more than all, Southey, are the English poets that kindled his flame and colored his diction."

Keble, besides the *Christian Year*, wrote *Lyra Innocentium*, *Thoughts in Verse on Christian Children, their Ways and Privileges* (1846), and a *Translation of the Psalter*.

3. *Love-Songs*.—The love-songs in our language are without number. Almost every poet has tried his skill in the art of amatory composition, and no age or society has been without effusions of this kind. A love-song, like a hymn of praise, may spring spontaneously from the human heart, and in such a case it may possess all the qualities of true poetry. Sometimes, however, it is nothing more than merely a conventional expression of passion, and then it lacks the chief requisite necessary for the highest forms of poetical composition.

The modern fashionable idea of amatory poetry was derived originally from the Spanish-Arabs, who claimed that love was the one essential theme of song. This notion was adopted by the Troubadours of Southern France, and by them the art of writing amorous ditties was brought to a wonderful perfection. They exercised their ingenuity in inventing every variety of love-poem; the *chanson*, consisting of from six to twenty stanzas, all cast in the same mould, and invariably ending with an *envoi*; the *sonnet*, originally intended to be chanted to the sound of the guitar; the *ballad*, to be sung during a dance; the *frottola*, a mere string of proverbs and trite sayings; the *planhs*, or complaints against a mistress's cruelty; the *tensons*, poetical dialogues between a pair of lovers; the *serenas*, or invitations and implorations to love. From the Troubadours of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries sprang every species of love-lyrics known to modern literature. The *sonnet* early became the favorite form in which poets delighted to express their sentiments of love. It is said to have been invented in the thirteenth century by one Peter de Vinca, a Troubadour, and it was brought to perfection by the Italian poets, Petrarch and Tasso. From Italy it was imported to England early in the sixteenth century, and first used by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard,

Earl of Surrey. The following is an excellent specimen from Wyatt:

I find no peace, and all my war is done :
I fear and hope, I burn and freeze likewise ;
I fly aloft, and yet cannot arise ;
And nought I have, and at the world I season ;
And locks nor loseth, nor holdeth me in prison.
And holds me not, yet can I scape no wise ;
Nor lets me live, nor die, at my devise,
And yet of death it giveth me occasion.
Without eye I see, without tongue I plain :
I wish to perish, yet I ask for health ;
I love another, and I hate myself ;
I feed me in sorrow, and laugh in all my pain ;
So thus displeaseth me both death and life,
And my delight is causer of this strife.*

The sonnet consists of fourteen lines, divided into two groups of eight and six lines respectively, the first group called the octave, and the second the sestet. In the model Italian sonnet the octave had but two rhymes—the first, fourth, fifth, and eighth lines rhyming together, and the second, third, sixth, and seventh. In the sestet also were two rhymes, the lines generally rhyming alternately. The above example varies slightly from this model. The poets who have succeeded Surrey and Wyatt in the writing of this form of verse have used great license in the arrangement of the rhymes. Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (1585) is a collection of one hundred and eight sonnets, interlarded with songs, in which the poet celebrates his unhappy love for Penelope Devereux, or "Stella," the daughter of the Earl of Essex. We copy the last sonnet in the collection. The student will doubtless discover in it some resemblance to the one we have given above from Wyatt:

* Warton's *History of English Poetry*, p. 648. The spelling has been modernized.

When sorrow, using mine own fire's might,
 Melts down his lead into my boiling breast,
 Through that dark furnace to my heart oppressed,
 There shines a joy from thee, my only light :
 But soon as thought of thee breeds my delight,
 And my young soul flutters to thee his nest,
 Most rude despair my daily unbidden guest,
 Clips straight my wings, straight wraps me in his night,
 And makes me then bow down my head and say,
 "Ah ! what doth Phœbus' gold that wretch avail,
 Whom iron doors do keep from use of day ?"
 So strangely, alas ! thy works in me prevail,
 That in my woes for thee thou art my joy,
 And in my joys for thee my only annoy.*

Edmund Spenser is the author of a similar collection, entitled *Amoretti*, and including eighty-six sonnets. The following is a specimen, being the ninth in the collection :

Long-while I sought to what I might compare
 Those powerful eyes, which lighten my dark spright :
 Yet found I nought on earth, to which I dare
 Resemble th' image of their goodly light.
 Not to the Sun ; for they do shine by night ;
 Nor to the Moon ; for they are changéd never ;
 Nor to the Stars ; for they have purer sight ;
 Nor to the Fire ; for they consume not never ;
 Nor to the Lightning ; for they still persevere ;
 Nor to the Diamond ; for they are more tender ;
 Nor unto Crystal ; for naught may them sever ;
 Nor unto Glasse ; such baseness might offend her.
 Then to the Maker's self they likest be,
 Whose light doth lighten all that here we see.†

Shakspeare was the author of a hundred and fifty-four sonnets, but not all were on the subject of love. The

* *Works of Sir Philip Sidney.* Edition of 1676, p. 617.

† *Works of Edmund Spenser* (edited by John Todd), p. 469.

arrangement of his rhymes is very different from that of the Italian model. The following is the hundred and forty-ninth :

Canst thou, O cruel ! say I love thee not,
 When I, against myself, with thee partake?
 Do I not think on thee, when I forgot
 Am of myself, all tyrant, for thy sake?
 Who hateth thee that I do call my friend?
 On whom frown'st thou that I do fawn upon?
 Nay, if thou low'r'st on me, do I not spend
 Revenge upon myself with present moan?
 What merit do I in myself respect,
 That is so proud thy service to despise,
 When all my best doth worship thy defect,
 Commanded by the motion of thine eyes?
 But, love, hate on, for now I know thy mind :
 Those that can see thou lov'st, and I am blind.*

The following sonnet, by Drayton, has been much admired, and has done more to perpetuate his memory as a poet than any of his more pretentious works :

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part!
 Nay, I have done ; you get no more of me.
 And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,
 That thus so clearly I myself can free.
 Shake hands forever, cancel all our vows,
 And when we meet at any time again
 Be it not seen on either of our brows,
 That we one jot of former love retain.
 Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath,
 When, his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,
 When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
 And innocence is closing up his eyes ;
 Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
 From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.†

* White's Edition of *Shakspeare's Works*. Vol. I., p. 227.

† *Drayton's Works*. Edition of 1752.

William Drummond, of Hawthornden, the friend of Ben Jonson, wrote some very fine sonnets. These sonnets are usually of the Shakspearian type rather than the Italian. The following is an example :

Then is she gone? Oh fool and coward I!
 Oh, good occasion lost, ne'er to be found!
 What fatal chains have my dull senses bound,
 When best they may, that they not fortune try?
 Here is the flow'ry bed where she did lie,
 With roses here she stellified the ground,
 She fix'd her eyes on this yet smiling pond,
 Nor time, nor courteous place, seem'd ought deny.
 Too long, too long, Respect, I do embrace
 Your counsel, full of threats and sharp disdain;
 Disdain in her sweet heart can have no place,
 And though come there, must straight retire again:
 Henceforth, Respect, farewell, I oft hear told
 Who lives in love can never be too bold.*

Hazlitt says of Drummond: "I cannot but think that his sonnets come as near as almost any others to the perfection of this kind of writing, which should embody a sentiment and every shade of sentiment, as it varies with time, and place, and humor, with the extravagance or lightness of a momentary impression, and should, when lengthened out into a series, form a history of the wayward moods of the poet's mind, the turns of his fate, and imprint the smile or frown of his mistress in indelible characters on the scattered leaves." I give one more example from the same author:

I know that all beneath the moon decays,
 And what by mortals in this world is wrought
 In time's great periods shall return to nought;
 That fairest states have fatal nights and days.
 I know that all the Muse's heavenly lays,

* *Ward's English Poets.* Vol. II., p. 28.

With toil of spright which are so dearly bought,
 As idle sounds, of few or none are sought;
 That there is nothing lighter than vain praise.
 I know frail beauty's like the purple flow'r,
 To which one morn oft birth and death affords;
 That love a jarring is of mind's accords,
 Where sense and will bring under reason's pow'r.
 Know what I list, this all cannot me move,
 But that, alas! I both must write and love.

And here is one by Sir Walter Raleigh :

Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay,
 Within that temple, where the vestal flame
 Was wont to burn, and passing by that way
 To see that buried dust of living fame,
 Whose tomb fair Love, and fairer Virtue kept.
 All suddenly I saw the Faery Queen :
 At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept ;
 And from thenceforth those Graces were not seen,
 For they this Queen attended, in whose stead
 Oblivion laid him down on Laura's hearse.
 Hereat the hardest stones were seen to bleed,
 And groans of buried ghosts the heavens did pierce,
 Where Homer's spright did tremble all for grief,
 And curst th' access of that celestial thief.

At a comparatively early period the sonnet departed from its original use and signification, and it has since been employed not only in the expression of the passion of love, but also in giving vent, in the most finished manner, to feelings and sentiments of quite another kind. And almost every poet since Shakspeare's day has attempted, with more or less success, to do something in this line of versification. Although, in one sense a digression from our subject, we insert the following specimens here :

[*From Milton.*]

When I consider how my light is spent
 Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,

And that one talent which is death to hide,
 Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, lest he, returning, chide;—
 “Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?”
 I fondly ask: But Patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need
 Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state
 Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
 And post o’er land and ocean without rest;—
 They also serve who only stand and wait.”

[*From Wordsworth.*]

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic you have frowned
 Mindless of its just honors; with this key
 Shakspeare unlocked his heart; the melody
 Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch’s wound:
 A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
 With it Camoëns soothed an exile’s grief;
 The sonnet glittered like a gay myrtle leaf
 Amid the cypresses with which Dante crowned
 His visionary brow; a glow-worm lamp
 It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
 To struggle through dark ways; and when a damp
 Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
 The thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
 Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

[*Keats’s Last Sonnet.*]

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art—
 Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,
 And watching, with eternal lids apart,
 Like Nature’s patient sleepless Eremite,
 The moving waters at their priestlike task
 Of pure ablution round earth’s human shores,
 Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask,
 Of snow upon the mountains and the moors.

No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
 Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast,
 To feel forever its soft fall and swell,
 Awake forever in a sweet unrest;
 Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
 And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

[*From Sydney Dobell.*]

(AMERICA.)

Nor force nor fraud shall sunder us! O ye
 Who north or south, on east or western land,
 Native to noble sounds, say truth for truth,
 Freedom for freedom, love for love, and God
 For God; O ye who in eternal youth
 Speak with a living and creative flood
 This universal English, and do stand
 Its breathing book; live worthy of that grand
 Heroic utterance—parted, yet a whole,
 Far yet unsevered—children brave and free
 Of the great Mother-tongue, and ye shall be
 Lords of an empire wide as Shakspeare's soul,
 Sublime as Milton's immemorial theme,
 And rich as Chaucer's speech, and fair as Spenser's dream.

[*From Dante Gabriel Rossetti.*]

When all desire at last and all regret
 Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,
 What shall assuage the unforgotten pain
 And teach the unforgetful to forget?
 Shall Peace be still a sunk stream long unmet,
 Or may the soul at once in a green plain
 Stoop through the spray of some sweet life-fountain,
 And call the dew-drenched flowering amulet?
 Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air
 Between the scripted petals softly blown
 Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown—
 Ah! let none other written spell soe'er
 But only the one Hope's one name be there—
 Not less nor more, but even that word alone.

Sonnets from the Portuguese is the title of a collection of forty-four sonnets by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. "From the Portuguese" is a poetic fiction. There is scarcely anything of a similar kind that equals them in depth of feeling and real beauty. The following will serve as examples:

I.

I thought once how Theocritus had sung
 Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
 Who each one in a gracious hand appears
 To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
 And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
 I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
 The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
 Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
 A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware
 So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
 Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair,
 And a voice said in mastery while I strove,
 "Guess now who holds thee?"—"Death," I said. But, there,
 The silver answer rang. . . . "Not Death, but Love."

XXXVI.

When we met first and loved, I did not build
 Upon the event with marble. Could it mean
 To last, a love set pendulous between
 Sorrow and sorrow? Nay, I rather thrilled,
 Distrusting every light that seemed to gild
 The onward path, and feared to overlean
 A finger even. And, though I have grown serene,
 And strong since then, I think that God has willed
 A still renewable fear. . . . O love, O troth. . . .
 Lest these enclasped hands should never hold,
 This mutual kiss drop down between us both
 As an unowned thing, once the lips being cold.
 And Love, be false! if *he*, to keep one oath,
 Must lose one joy, by his life's star foretold.

XLIII.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every-day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith,
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

XLIV.

Belovèd, thou hast brought me many flowers
Plucked in the garden, all the summer through
And winter, and it seemed as if they grew
In this close room, nor missed the sun and showers,
So, in the like name of that love of ours,
Take back these thoughts which here unfolded too,
And which on warm and cold days I withdrew
From my heart's ground. Indeed, those beds and bowers
Be overgrown with bitter weeds and rue,
And wait thy weeding; yet here's eglantine,
Here's ivy!—take them, as I used to do
Thy flowers, and keep them where they shall not pine.
Instruct thine eyes to keep their colors true,
And tell thy soul, their roots are left in mine.

These sonnets were published in 1844. Mr. Stedman says: "Mrs. Browning's love-sonnets are the outpourings of a woman's tenderest emotions, at an epoch when her art was most mature, and her whole nature exalted by a passion that to such a being comes but for once and for all. Here, indeed, the singer rose to her height; here she

is absorbed in rapturous utterance, radiant and triumphant with her own joy. The mists have risen and her sight is clear. Her mouthing and affectation are forgotten, her lips cease to stammer, the lyrical spirit has full control. The torrent, artificial in weaker hands, becomes swift with feeling, red with a 'veined humanity,' the chosen vehicle of a royal woman's vows. Graces, felicities, vigor, glory of speech, here are so crowded as to tread each upon the other's sceptred pall. The first sonnet, equal to any in our tongue, is an overture containing the motive of the canticle—'not Death, but Love,' had seized her unawares. The growth of this happiness, her worship of its bringer, her doubts of her own worthiness, are the theme of these poems. Never was a man or minstrel so honored as her 'most gracious singer of high poems.' In fine, the Portuguese sonnets, whose title was a screen behind which the singer poured out her full heart, are the most exquisite poetry hitherto written by a woman, and of themselves justify us in pronouncing their author the greatest of her sex, on the ground that the highest mission of a female poet is the expression of love, and that no other woman approaching her in genius has essayed the ultimate form of that expression."*

Leaving now the subject of sonnets, let us devote some attention to other forms of love-lyrics. Both Surrey and Wyatt were the authors of some very fine specimens of love-poems,—fine, at least, for the age in which they were written. The following, by Wyatt, is not without true merit:

The Lover complaineth of the Unkindness of his Love.

My lute, awake! perform the last
 Labor that thou and I shall waste;
 And end that I have now begun:
 And when this song is sung and past,
 My lute! be still, for I have done.

* *Victorian Poets.*

As to be heard where ear is none ;
As lead to grave in marble stone,
My song may pierce her heart as soon ;
Should we then sing, or sigh, or moan ?
No, no, my lute ! for I have done.

The rock doth not so cruelly,
Repulse the waves continually,
As she my suit and affection :
So that I am past remedy ;
Whereby my lute and I have done.

Proud of the spoil that thou hast got
Of simple hearts thorough Love's shot,
By whom, unkind, thou hast them won ;
Think not he hath his bow forgot,
Although my lute and I have done.

Vengeance shall fall on thy disdain,
That makest but game of earnest pain ;
Trow not alone under the sun
Unquit to cause thy lovers plain,
Although my lute and I have done.

May chance thee lie withered and old
In winter nights, that are so cold,
Plaining in vain unto the moon ;
Thy wishes then dare not be told :
Care then who list, for I have done.

And then may chance thee to repent
The time that thou hast lost and spent
To cause thy lovers sigh and swoon ;
Then shalt thou know beauty but lent,
And wish and want, as I have done.

Now cease, my lute ! This is the last
Labor that thou and I shall waste ;
And ended is that we begun :
Now is thy song both sung and past ;
My lute, be still, for I have done.

A recent English critic speaks thus of Wyatt's poetry :
 "Of his lyrics, some are borrowed from the Spanish, some from the French, some from the Italian ; all, with the exception of half a dozen, perhaps, are more or less modeled on writings in those languages. . . . His general tone is sombre, sententious, and serious, and he is too often reflecting when he ought to be feeling. The greater part of his poetry is wasted in describing with weary minuteness transports of slighted and requited affection, but his true place is among observant men of the world, scholars, and moralists. . . . He is inferior to Surrey in diction, in tastes, in originality, and in poetical feeling."

The following is a pleasing specimen of Surrey's love-poetry :

Description and Praise of his Love Geraldine.

From Tuscan' came my lady's worthy race ;
 Fair Florence was some time their ancient seat ;
 The western isle, whose pleasant shore doth face
 Wild Camber's cliffs, did give her lively heat :
 Fostered she was with milk of Irish breast ;
 Her sire an earl ; her dame of princes' blood :
 From tender years, in Britain she doth rest
 With king's child, where she tasteth costly food.
 Hunsdon did first present her to my een :
 Bright is her hue, and Geraldine she hight :
 Hampton me taught to wish her first for mine :
 And Windsor, alas, doth chase me from her sight.
 Her beauty of kind, her virtues from above ;
 Happy is he that can obtain her love.

In almost all the works of the great Elizabethan writers we find, here and there, most exquisite little lyrics with love for their theme. They are scattered through the prose portion of Sidney's *Arcadia*, and sandwiched between his sonnets to Stella. They form delightful little episodes in some of Shakspeare's dramas. They occupy prominent places in Ben Jonson's *Masques*, and are thickly inter-

persed among his *Underwoods*. They are used more rarely by Spenser and Marlowe, but the latter's *Passionate Shepherd to his Love* will always be regarded as one of the most delightful of love-songs:

Come live with me, and be my love ;
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Woods or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies ;
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle ;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull ;
Fair-lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold ;

A belt of straw and ivy-buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs :
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherd-swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning :
If these delights thy mind may move,
Come live with me and be my love.

And *The Nymph's Reply*, by Sir Walter Raleigh, is equally beautiful :

If that the World and Love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee and be thy love.

But time drives flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage, and rocks grow cold,
And Philomel becometh dumb,
And all complain of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yield ;
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancie's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw, and ivie buds,
Thy coral clasps, and amber studs ;
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee, and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed ;
Had joys no date, nor age no need ;
Then those delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy love.*

These lyrics, with nearly a hundred and fifty more by Shakspeare, Breton, Spenser, Lodge, Drayton, Sir Philip Sidney, and others, were published in 1600, in a volume entitled *England's Helicon*. The poems in this collection are principally love-songs, but they differ from the love-songs of Surrey and Wyatt and the earlier poets in being not melancholy and complaining, but gay and hopeful. Izaak Walton, in his *Compleat Angler* (1653), describes them as "old-fashioned poetry, but choicely good." Indeed, they are characterized by their graceful simplicity and artless beauty, and some of them will rank among the best lyrics in our language. The student will find in the second volume of Ellis's *Specimens of English Poets* numerous selections from this work.

The lyrics of Ben Jonson, mixed in with his masques and forming a portion of his *Underwoods*, are, in many instances, exceedingly beautiful. They prove that their author possessed not only the poetic faculty, but, in the highest degree, the true poetic feeling which comes from inspiration and is the birthright of all genuine poets. "And when we consider how many other intellectual excellences distinguished him,—wit, observation, judgment, memory, learning,—we must acknowledge that the inscription on his tomb, 'O rare Ben Jonson!' is not more pithy than it is true."

The lyrics of Sir John Suckling, collected posthumously in 1648, in a volume called *Fragmenta Aurea*, surpass in gayety and ease those of all former writers. But they are of very uneven merit, not more than half a dozen being worthy of any special attention. "His name still lives in the popular ear," says E. W. Gosse, "as the names of poets far greater than he will never live. . . . His manner of writing affected the course of English literature, and showed its strength less in his own lyrics than in the fact that for the next fifty years no one could write a good love-song without more or less reminding the reader of Suckling. To the very end of the century, 'natural, easy Suckling,' was the type of literary elegance to the Millamants and Lady Froths of fashion." Here is a little poem on *Constancy*:

Out upon it, I have loved
 Three whole days together;
 And am like to love three more,
 If it prove fair weather.

Time shall moult away his wings,
 Ere he shall discover
 In the whole wide world again
 Such a constant lover.

But the spite on't is, no praise
 Is due at all to me;

Love with me had made no stays,
Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she,
And that very face,
There had been at least ere this
A dozen dozen in her place.

Robert Herrick was for a time a clergyman in the Anglican Church, but that vocation was certainly ill-suited to a man of his amatory and bacchanalian disposition. In 1648 he published a collection of both sacred songs and love-lyrics in a volume entitled *Hesperides; or, Works both Humane and Divine*. The following are fair examples of his "humane" pieces:

Julia's Lips.

Cherrie ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones; come and buy:
If so be you ask me where
They do grow, I answer, There,
Where my Julia's lips do smile;
There's the land, or cherry-isle;
Whose plantations fully show
All the year where cherries grow.

To the Virgins.

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may;
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.
* * * * *
That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But, being spent, the worse and worst
Times will succeed the former.
Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry;
For, having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

"Herrick's songs," says Robert Buchanan, "suggest the picture of a respectable British Bacchus, stout and middle-aged, lipping soft lyrics to the blushing Ariadne at his side, while in the background of flowers and green leaves we catch a glimpse of Oberon and Titania walking through a stately minuet on a close-shaven lawn, to the rollicking admiration of assembled fairy-land."

Abraham Cowley was the author of a collection of amatory songs, to which he gave the name of *The Mistress; or, Several Copies of Love Verses*. This work was published in 1647. It is a series of short love-songs imitated from the Italian, and remarkable for neither beauty nor tenderness nor truth. Dr. Johnson describes these songs as "such as might have been written for penance by a hermit, or for hire by a philosophical rhymist who had only heard of another sex." The following stanzas will sufficiently illustrate the extravagance and the counterfeited passion which characterize these pieces:

O fountains, when in you shall I
Myself, cased of unpeaceful thoughts, espy?
O fields! O woods! when, when shall I be made
The happy tenant of your shade?
Here's the spring-head of pleasure's flood;
Where all the riches lie, that she
Has coin'd and stamp'd for good.

Pride and ambition here,
Only in far-fetched metaphors appear;
Here nought but winds can hurtful murmurs scatter,
And nought but echo flatter.
The gods, when they descended, hither
From heaven did always choose their way;
And therefore we may boldly say,
That 'tis the way too thither.

How happy here should I,
And one dear she live, and embracing die!
She who is all the world, and can exclude

In deserts solitude.
I should have then this only fear,
Lest men, when they my pleasures see,
Should hither throng to live like me,
And make a city here.

The hundred years of imitation and artificial conceits which followed the Restoration in England produced but few love-songs worthy of notice. Neither Dryden nor Pope nor any of their imitators have written anything under this head which can claim our serious attention. But when we arrive at the closing years of the eighteenth century and the great literary revolution which marked that period, we begin to meet with so many examples of lyrical poetry of this class that we scarcely know whither to turn first.

Chief among the poets of this period, and the greatest song-writer known in English literature, was Robert Burns. His lyrics are of three kinds—those of love, of patriotism, and of good cheer. Stopford Brooke says of him: "In his love-songs we hear again, only with greater truth of natural feeling, the same music which, in the age of Elizabeth, enchanted the world. It was as a love-poet that he began to write, and the first edition of his poems appeared in 1786. But he was not only the poet of love, but also of the new excitement about man. Himself poor, he sang the poor. Neither poverty nor low birth made a man the worse—the man was 'a man for a' that.' He did the same work in Scotland, in 1786, that Crabbe began in England in 1783, and Cowper in 1785, and it is worth remarking how the dates run together."

The student should make a careful and thorough study of the poems of Burns. The slight information to be gleaned from a manual like this will by no means suffice for even a superficial knowledge of that master-poet. We quote but a single specimen—a poem which has been said to contain "the whole essence of a thousand love-songs."

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
 Ae farewell, alas, forever!
 Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee;
 Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
 Who shall say that fortune grieves him,
 While the star of hope she leaves him?
 Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
 Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
 Naething could resist my Nancy:
 But to see her was to love her;
 Love but her, and love forever.
 Had we never loved sae kindly,
 Had we never loved sae blindly,
 Never met—or never parted,
 We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
 Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
 Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
 Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure!
 Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
 Ae farewell, alas, forever!
 Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
 Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

Among the other love-songs of Burns which should be studied are *Mary Morison*; *Oh, My Luve's like a Red, Red Rose*; *Wilt thou be My Dearie?* *Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon*; *I Love My Jean*; *Bonnie Jean*; *Bonnie Lesley*; *To Mary*; *Highland Mary*. We shall have occasion to speak of Burns again before we leave the subject of lyrical poetry.

The love-poems of Thomas Moore have seldom been excelled in melody and in tenderness of expression. Although not possessing that intensity of feeling so prominent in Burns's poems, they are characterized by a certain sweetness of tone and a beauty of diction scarcely to be

found elsewhere. Hazlitt says: "His fancy is forever on the wing, flutters in the gale, glitters in the sun. Everything lives, moves, and sparkles in his poetry, while over all Love waves his purple light. His thoughts are as restless, as bright, and as many as the insects that people the sun's beams." The following is a fair example of his lighter lyrics:

Come O'er the Sea.

Come o'er the sea,
Maiden! with me,
Mine through sunshine, storm, and snows.
Seasons may roll,
But the true soul
Burns the same, where'er it goes.
Let fate frown on, so we love and part not;
'Tis life where thou art, 'tis death where thou art not.
Then, come o'er the sea,
Maiden! with me,
Come wherever the wild wind blows;
Seasons may roll,
But the true soul
Burns the same, where'er it goes.

Is not the sea
Made for the free,
Land for courts and chains alone?
Here we are slaves,
But, on the waves,
Love and Liberty's all our own!
No eye to watch, and no tongue to wound us,
All earth forgot, and all heaven around us!—
Then, come o'er the sea,
Maiden! with me,
Mine through sunshine, storm, and snows!
Seasons may roll,
But the true soul
Burns the same, where'er it goes.

We shall close this brief notice of the love-songs of our language by calling the reader's attention to those inimitable little pieces of Coleridge entitled *Genevieve* and *Love*. They are among the purest and most exquisite love-poems ever written. The first is short, and we copy it entire.

Maid of my Love, sweet Genevieve!
 In beauty's light you glide along:
 Your eye is like the star of eve,
 And sweet your Voice as Seraph's song.
 Yet not your heavenly Beauty gives
 This heart with passion soft to glow:
 Within your soul a Voice there lives!
 It bids you hear the tale of woe.
 When sinking low the Sufferer wan
 Beholds no hand outstretch'd to save,
 Fair as the bosom of the Swan
 That rises graceful o'er the wave,
 I've seen your breast with pity heave,
 And therefore love I you, sweet Genevieve!

The poem *Love*, of which the above is really the introduction, is a charming little story most exquisitely told, relating how the poet won the love of Genevieve by moving her soul to pity. For

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
 My hope, my joy, my Genevieve.
 She loves me best, whene'er I sing
 The songs that make her grieve.
 * * * * *
 I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
 And told her love with virgin pride;
 And so I won my Genevieve,
 My bright and beauteous Bride.

4. *Songs of Patriotism*.—There was a time when the true signification of patriotism was unknown. Love of country extended no farther than love for the king and admiration

of his deeds. During such time no real patriotic poetry could exist. If such poetry were attempted, it was usually characterized by an air of fawning servility not at all in consonance with our modern notions of patriotism. Such were the *Hymns of Astræa*, written in honor of Queen Elizabeth, by Sir John Davies, and such was Dryden's *Astræa Redux*, celebrating the "happy restoration of Charles II."

Indeed, no patriotic poems, lyrical or otherwise, worthy of notice, appeared until after the English people had fully gained their constitutional rights and liberties.

One of the most noted patriotic hymns in the English language, and which Southey declared would be the national hymn of Britain "as long as she maintains her political power," is the song entitled *Rule Britannia*. It was written by James Thomson, the author of *The Seasons*, and first appeared as a lyric in the masque of *Alfred*, produced in 1741 at Cliefden, the residence of the Prince of Wales. The poem consists of six stanzas. We copy the first and the last :

When Britain first at Heaven's command,
 Arose from out the azure main,
 This was the charter of the land,
 And guardian angels sung the strain :
 Rule Britannia ! Britannia rules the waves !
 Britons never will be slaves.

* * * * *

The Muses, still with Freedom fount,
 Shall to thy happy coast repair ;
 Blest Isle ! with matchless beauty crowned,
 And manly hearts to guard the fair.
 Rule Britannia ! Britannia rules the waves !
 Britons never will be slaves.

Tobias Smollett's *Ode to Independence* is worthy of notice here. The following are its opening lines :

Thy spirit Independence, let me share !
 Lord of the lion-heart and eagle-eye.

Thy steps I follow, with my bosom bare,
 Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky.
 Deep in the frozen regions of the north,
 A goddess violated brought thee forth,
 Immortal Liberty, whose look sublime
 Hath bleach'd the tyrant's cheek in every varying clime.

Nor at all inferior to this is the poem entitled *The Tears of Scotland*, written by the same author soon after the battle of Culloden and the terrible cruelties of the Duke of Cumberland. "This little poem," says Shaw, "is equally honorable to the civil courage of Smollett as to his genius; for so free an expression of outraged patriotism was then dangerous, and it is recorded that the poet when warned of that danger after composing six stanzas of vigorous denunciation, instantly sat down and added a seventh, more bitter and stinging than those which had gone before." Here is that seventh stanza:

While the warm blood bedews my veins,
 And unimpaired remembrance reigns,
 Resentment of my country's fate
 Within my filial breast shall beat:
 And, spite of her insulting foe,
 My sympathizing verse shall flow:
 Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn,
 Thy banish'd peace, thy laurels torn!

No finer encomium of patriotism has ever been written than the noble lines which open the sixth canto of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*:

Breathes there a man with soul so dead
 Who never to himself hath said,
 This is my own, my native land?
 Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
 As home his footsteps he hath turned,
 From wandering on a foreign strand?
 If such there be, go mark him well;
 For him no minstrel raptures swell:

High though his titles, proud his name,
 Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,—
 Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
 The wretch concentr'd all in self,
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
 And, doubly dying, shall go down
 To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
 Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

O Caledonia, stern and wild,
 Meet nurse for a poetic child!
 Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
 Land of the mountain and the flood,
 Land of my sires! what mortal hand
 Can e'er untie the filial band
 That knits me to thy rugged strand?

Another Scotch lyrical poet was James Hogg, commonly called the Ettrick Shepherd. Some of his songs are no mean rivals of those of Burns. We give a single stanza from one of his patriotic poems:

'Mong Scotia's glens and mountains blue,
 Where Gallia's lilies never grew,
 Where Roman eagles never flew,
 Nor Danish lions rallied;
 Where skulks the roe in anxious fear,
 Where roves the stately, nimble deer,
 There live the lads to freedom dear,
 By foreign yoke ne'er galled.
 There woods grow wild on every hill;
 There freemen wander at their will;
 Sure Scotland will be Scotland still,
 While hearts so brave defend her.

Irish patriotism finds vent in the beautiful lyrics of Moore. *The National Airs*, published by Thomas Moore in 1815, include about seventy songs, most of them of a patriotic character, but not all referring to Ireland. His *Irish Melodies* is a larger collection, containing a hundred and

twenty-five lyrics, and it is in these that he particularly excels as a song-writer. The songs were composed in order to furnish appropriate words to a large number of popular airs, and the music was arranged by an Irish composer named Sir John Stevenson. These poems sing, in strains of the most exquisite beauty, the past glories and sufferings and the future hopes of Ireland. They sometimes breathe the deepest pathos, approaching almost the sadness of a dirge.

For who can ask for notes of pleasure,
 My drooping harp! from chords like thine?
 Alas, the lark's gay morning measure
 As ill would suit the swan's decline!
 Or how shall I, who love, who bless thee,
 Invoke thy breath for Freedom's strains,
 When even the wreaths in which I dress thee,
 Are sadly mixed—half flowers, half chains?*

Other poems and songs inspired by patriotism or patriotic feelings are very numerous in the literature of England. Campbell's *Battle of the Baltic* and *Ye Mariners of England* are among the best of those which relate to English patriotism. The latter, in sentiment, but not in music, may well compare with the *Rule Britannia*. Here are the last two stanzas:

Britannia needs no bulwark,
 No towers along the steep;
 Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
 Her home is on the deep.
 With thunders from her native oak,
 She quells the floods below,—
 As they roar on the shore,
 When the stormy tempests blow;
 When the battle rages loud and long,
 And the stormy tempests blow.

* *Irish Melodies: My Gentle Harp.* Air—*The Coina, or Dirge.*

The meteor flag of England
 Shall yet terrific burn,
 Till danger's troubled night depart,
 And the star of peace return.
 Then, then, ye ocean-warriors !
 Our song and feast shall flow
 To the fame of your name,
 When the storm has ceased to blow ;
 When the fiery fight is heard no more,
 And the storm has ceased to blow.

In connection with the study of purely patriotic lyrics, the student will be interested in *The Bard, a Pindaric Ode*, by the poet Gray. This poem is founded upon a tradition that Edward I., having completed the conquest of Wales, had ordered all the bards of that country to be put to death. The bard of the poem is represented as standing

On a rock whose haughty brow
 Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,

and invoking curses upon the army of Edward as it files through the mountain-passes

And down the steep of Snowden's shaggy side.

After lamenting the fate of his country, he continues, in prophetic strain, to review the whole panorama of the future history of England, closing with a vision of the glories of Elizabeth's reign and of the poetry of Shakspeare and Milton.

He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
 Deep in the roaring tide he plung'd to endless night.

Mr. Shaw says: "The general march of this poem has a rush and a glow worthy of Pindar himself. The phantoms of the great and the illustrious flit before us like the shadowy kings in the weird procession of Macbeth; and

the unity of sentiment is maintained first by the gratified vengeance with which the prophet foresees the crimes and sufferings of the oppressors of his country and their descendants, and by the triumphant prediction of the glorious reign of the Tudor race in Britain."

The Isles of Greece, by Lord Byron, and *Hellas*, by Shelley, are familiar examples of poetry inspired by patriotism. The former occurs as an episode in *Don Juan* (Canto III.), and is represented as having been sung by a poet in the suite of the hero, "whose muse made increment of anything from the high lyrical to the low rational."

In France, for instance, he would write a chanson ;
 In England, a six-canto quarto tale ;
 In Spain, he'd make a ballad or romance on
 The last war—much the same in Portugal ;
 In Germany, the Pegasus he'd prance on
 Would be old Goethe's—(see what says de Staël) ;
 In Italy, he'd ape the "Trecentisti ;"
 In Greece, he'd sing some sort of hymn like this t'ye.

Then follows the song, beginning,—

The isles of Greece! the isles of Greece!
 Where burning Sappho loved and sung,—
 Where grow the arts of war and peace,—
 Where Delos rose and Phœbus sprung!
 Eternal summer gilds them yet,
 But all, except their sun, is set.

Some of the choruses in *Hellas* are very beautiful. The last, in which the poet paints the ideal future of Greece, may be quoted as a worthy companion-piece and answer to Byron's impassioned but desponding lyric just referred to:

The world's great age begins anew,
 The golden years return,
 The earth doth like a snake renew
 Her winter weeds outworn :
 Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam
 Like wrecks of a dis-olving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
 From waves serener far ;
 A new Peneus rolls his fountains
 Against the morning star ;
 Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
 Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
 Fraught with a later prize ;
 Another Orpheus sings again,
 And loves, and weeps, and dies ;
 A new Ulysses leaves once more
 Calypso for his native shore.

Oh write no more the tale of Troy,
 If earth Death's scroll must be—
 Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
 Which dawns upon the free,
 Although a subtler Sphinx renew
 Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,
 And to remoter time
 Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
 The splendor of its prime ;
 And leave, if nought so bright may live,
 All earth can take or Heaven can give.

The patriotic lyrics of America are very numerous; yet they are so well known that any extended notice of them is not required in this manual. *America; Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean; Hail Columbia!* and the *Star-Spangled Banner*, are familiar not only to all American students, but to all American people. The observance of the Centennial of American Independence elicited innumerable patriotic poems, both lyrical and otherwise, some of which will doubtless take permanent places in our literature.

We shall close our notice of patriotic poetry with two quotations, neither of them lyrical, but both referring to our subject. The first is from Montgomery's poem entitled *My Country*:

There is a land of every land the pride,
 Beloved by Heaven o'er all the world beside,
 Where brighter suns dispense serener light,
 And milder moons imparadise the night;
 A land of beauty, virtue, valor, truth,
 Time-tutored age, and love-exalted youth.

* * * * *

Where shall that land, that spot of earth be found?
 Art thou a man?—a patriot?—look around;
 Oh thou shalt find, howe'er thy footsteps roam,
 That land *thy* country, and that spot *thy* home.
 Man through all ages of revolving time,
 Unchanging man, in every varying clime,
 Deems his own land of every land the pride,
 Beloved by Heaven o'er all the world beside;
 His home the spot of earth supremely blest,
 A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest.

The second is from Goldsmith's poem, *The Traveller; or, a Prospect of Society*.

But where to find that happiest spot below,
 Who can direct when all pretend to know?
 The shuddering tenant of the frigid zone
 Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own;
 Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
 And his long nights of revelry and ease;
 The naked Negro, panting at the Line,
 Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine,
 Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
 And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.
 Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,
 His first, best country, ever is at home.

5. *Battle-Songs*.—Similar in character to the patriotic poems which we have examined, and, no doubt, originating in the same sentiment of love of country, are the battle-songs or war-lyrics of our literature. We have already found these songs in the early Anglo-Saxon poetry, notably in the pieces entitled the *Battle of Finsboro'*, and

the *Battle of Brunanburh*, and the *Fight at Maldon*. We have found them, too, occupying a prominent place among the early ballads; as, for example, *Chevy Chase* and the *Battle of Otterbourne*. In the Transition Period, the poems of Laurence Minot approach nearest to the character of war-lyrics. These poems are eleven in number, the first relating to the battle of Halidon Hill (1333), and the last to the siege of Guines Castle (1352). They were written probably about 1360. They are particularly interesting, from the fact that the author has attempted to combine the characteristics of Anglo-Saxon verse, such as alliteration, with rhyme and the verses and stanzas peculiar to romance poetry. In the eleven poems there are also no fewer than ten different styles of versification. A single stanza from his description of the siege of Calais will suffice as an illustration:

Calais men, now may ye care,
 And murmuring mun ye have to mede;
 Mirth on mold get ye no mare,
 Sir Edward sall ken you youre crede.
 Whilum war ye wight in wede,
 To robbing rathly for to ren;
 Men you soon of youre misdede,
 Youre care es cumen, will ye it ken.

In modern times, when the achievements of peace are regarded as even greater than the conquests of war, such songs form a less important part of literature, and are by no means numerous. Sir Walter Scott was, without doubt, the best modern writer of battle-songs. His *Pibroch of Donald Dhu* is, perhaps, the best known, and is full of fire and warlike fury. "This is a very ancient pibroch," says the author, "belonging to the clan MacDonald, and supposed to refer to the expedition of Donald Balloch, who, in 1431, launched from the isles with a considerable force, invaded Lochabar, and at Inverlochy defeated and put to flight the Earls of Marr and Caithness, though at the head

of an army superior to his own." Of almost equal merit are the songs entitled *MacGregor's Gathering*, and the *War-Song of the Royal Edinburgh Light Dragoons*. We have already spoken of Scott's masterly power in describing battle-scenes, and, in this connection, the student may read again his description of the great battle of Flodden, in *Marmion*, and of Bannockburn, in the *Lord of the Isles*. Nor should he omit the short piece on the *Battle of Sempach*, "a literal translation of an ancient Swiss ballad upon the battle fought at Sempach, 9th July, 1386, being the victory by which the Swiss cantons established their independence."

The poet Burns vents his patriotic ardor in the following lines, in which Bruce is supposed to be addressing his followers on the eve of the onset at Bannockburn :

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
 Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
 Welcome to your gory bed,
 Or to glorious victory.

Now's the day and now's the hour ;
 See the front o' battle lower ;
 See approach proud Edward's power ;
 Edward ! chains and slavery !

Wha will be a traitor knave ?
 Wha can fill a coward's grave ?
 Wha sac base as be a slave ?
 Traitor ! coward ! turn and flee !

Wha for Scotland's king and law
 Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
 Freeman stand, or freeman fa' ?
 Sodger ! hero ! on wi' me !

By oppression's woes and pains !
 By your sons in servile chains !
 We will drain our dearest veins,
 But they shall be—shall be free !

Lay the proud usurpers low!
 Tyrants fall in every foe!
 Liberty's in every blow!
 Forward! let us do or die! *

Hohenlinden and the *Song of the Greeks*, by Thomas Campbell, are war-lyrics of considerable power and beauty, but wanting the fire and enthusiasm which characterize the true battle-song. Lord Macaulay has written two stirring battle-pieces, *Ivry* and *Naseby*. The student will also find in his *Lays of Ancient Rome* some very vivid pictures of war-scenes. The descriptions in the *Battle of Regilius* and in *Horatius* are excelled only by Scott.

The most celebrated of modern battle-lyrics is the little ballad of Tennyson's, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, written in 1854, "after reading the first report of the *Times* correspondent" concerning the famous attack on the fortress of Balaklava, in the Crimea. Two hundred and fifty years before that time, Old Michael Drayton wrote a ballad on the *Battle of Agincourt*. We copy two stanzas of Drayton's poem, and also two of Tennyson's, in order to illustrate the striking resemblance between them.

[From Drayton.]

They now to fight are gone;
 Armor on armor shone;
 Drum now to drum did groan—
 To hear was wonder;
 That with the cries they make,
 The very earth did shake;
 Trumpet to trumpet spake,
 Thunder to thunder.

* * * * *

Upon Saint Crispin's day
 Fought was this noble fray,
 Which fame did not delay
 To England to carry;

* *Works of Robert Burns.* Edited by Chambers, IV., 41.

Oh, when shall Englishmen,
 With such acts fill a pen,
 Or England breed again
 Such a King Harry?

[From *Tennyson*.]

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon in front of them
 Volleyed and thundered;
 Stormed at with shot and shell,
 Boldly they rode, and well,
 Into the jaws of Death,
 Into the mouth of Hell,
 Rode the six hundred.

* * * * *

When can their glory fade?
 Oh, the wild charge they made!
 All the world wondered.
 Honor the charge they made!
 Honor the Light Brigade,
 Noble six hundred!

Of poems relating indirectly to battle-scenes, there is a large number, of various degrees of merit. We shall mention only *Bingen on the Rhine*, by Mrs. Norton; *The Burial of Sir John Moore*, by Charles Wolfe; the ballads in Aytoun's *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers*; Southey's little poem entitled *The Battle of Blenheim*; and Addison's *Campaign*, already alluded to in our chapter on Narrative Poetry.

6. *Odes*.—The idea of the Ode was derived from the Greeks. It is the most perfect model of the lyrical style, and is the expression of the feelings of the poet in moments of high excitement, and with the vividness inspired by present emotion. Originally, these feelings were expressed chiefly by the aid of imagery, but now the ode is often simply the earnest utterance of thought. Odes are variously classified, according to the subjects of which

they treat. The hymn, in its proper meaning, is a religious ode; the heroic ode is that which celebrates some hero, a victory, greatness of mind, or physical prowess; the didactic ode deals with instructive or inspiring truths; the satirical ode censures the morals and manners of the times; the philosophical ode is the utterance of noble and sublime feelings.

Two of the most famous odes in the English language are those written by Dryden and by Pope on Saint Cecilia's Day. Saint Cecilia is the Christian Polyhymnia, the Muse of Sacred Poetry. She was, according to the legend, a Roman lady of distinction, who so excelled in the art of playing upon musical instruments, that one day an angel, enraptured by the divine harmony, came down from heaven to listen. She suffered martyrdom for her devotion to the faith, A.D. 230. The reader will find one version of her story in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*—*The Second Nonnes Tale*. The twenty-second day of November is dedicated to this saint, and in some places is celebrated with musical entertainments.

Dryden's ode, entitled *Alexander's Feast*, was written in 1697, at the request of the Musical Meeting, and was first set to music by one Jeremiah Clarke, a steward of the festival. It was afterwards rearranged by the great composer, Handel, and performed in 1736. The theme of the ode is the power of music over the human passions. Alexander, having returned from his victorious expedition to the East, sits upon his throne at Persepolis, with the lovely Thaïs by his side, and his valiant captains around him. Timotheus, the greatest musician of the age,

With flying fingers touched the lyre;
The trembling notes ascend the sky
And heavenly joys inspire.

He sings the praises of Alexander and his descent from the Lybian Jove; and the strains of his music are so eloquent and persuasive, that

The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,
 "A present deity!" they shout around:
 "A present deity!" the vaulted roofs rebound.
 With ravished ears
 The monarch hears,
 Assumes the god
 Affects to nod,
 And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus, then, the sweet musician sung;
 Of Bacchus ever fair, and ever young.
 The jolly god in triumph comes;
 Sound the trumpets, beat the drums;
 Flushed with a purple grace,
 He shews his honest face.
 Now, give the haut-boys breath; he comes, he comes!
 Bacchus, ever fair and young,
 Drinking joys did first ordain;
 Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
 Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
 Rich the treasure,
 Sweet the pleasure;
 Sweet is pleasure after pain.

These stirring sounds excite the king's vanity; he recalls to memory his battles and his great victories, and he defies heaven and earth. Timotheus, observing his madness, changes his song.

He chose a mournful muse,
 Soft pity to infuse;

he mourns the death of the betrayed Darius; the king is greatly depressed, and weeps as he is reminded of "the various turns of Chance below."

The mighty master smiled to see
 That love was in the next degree;
 'Twas but a kindred sound to move,
 For pity melts the mind to love.
 Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
 Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.

He praises the dazzling beauty of Thais; the king is vanquished by love. Suddenly the musician strikes the lyre again:

A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.
 Break his bands of sleep asunder,
 And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.
 Hark, hark! the horrid sound
 Has raised up his head;
 As awaked from the dead,
 And amaz'd he stares around.
 "Revenge, revenge!" Timotheus cries,
 See the Furies arise;
 See the snakes, that they rear,
 How they hiss in their hair!
 And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
 Behold a ghastly band,
 Each a torch in his hand!
 Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,
 And unburied remain
 Inglorious on the plain;
 Give the vengeance due
 To the valiant crew.
 Behold how they toss their torches on high,
 How they point to the Persian abodes,
 And glittering temples of their hostile gods;—
 The princes applaud with a furious joy,
 And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
 Thais led the way
 To light him to his prey,
 And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

Thus it was that music enthused, exalted, softened, soothed, maddened, mastered, the passions of men. But the music of Timotheus appealed to the feelings of the human heart only. It was left for Cecilia to move angels also.

Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
 Or both divide the crown;
 He rais'd a mortal to the skies,
 She drew an angel down.

Macaulay says of this ode: "It was Dryden's greatest work and the last. It is the masterpiece of the second class of poetry, and ranks just below the great models of the first." It was not, however, his last work, as his *Fables* were published two years later.

Hazlitt says: "The famous *Ode on Saint Cecilia* deserves its reputation; for, as a piece of poetical mechanism to be set to music, or recited in alternate strophe and antistrophe, with classical allusions and flowing verse, nothing can be better. It is equally fit to be said or sung; it is not equally good to read. It is lyrical, without being epic or dramatic. . . . Lyrical poetry, of all others, bears the nearest resemblance to painting. It deals in hieroglyphics and passing figures, which depend for effect, not on the working out, but on the selection. It is the dance and pantomime of poetry. In variety and rapidity of movement, the *Alexander's Feast* has all that can be required in this respect; it only wants loftiness and truth of character."

Hallam says: "Its excellence, indeed, is undeniable; it has the raciness, the rapidity, the mastery of language which belong to Dryden; the transitions are animated, the contrasts effective. But few lines are highly poetical, and some sink to the level of a common drinking-song."

Pope's *Ode on Saint Cecilia's Day* was written in 1708, at the suggestion of Sir Richard Steele; it was set to music by Maurice Greene, and performed at Cambridge in 1730. After an invocation to the Muses, the poet speaks thus of the powers of music:

By music minds an equal temper know,
Nor swell too high, nor sink too low.
If in the breast tumultuous joys arise,
Music her soft, assuasive voice applies;
Or, when the soul is press'd with cares,
Exalts her in enlivening airs.
Warriors she fires with animated sounds;
Pours balm into the bleeding lover's wounds:

Melancholy lifts her head,
 Morpheus rouses from his bed,
 Sloth unfolds her arms and wakes,
 Listening Envy drops her snakes;
 Intestine war no more our passions wage,
 And giddy factions hear away their rage.

Then he illustrates, by relating the story of Orpheus. The influence of patriotic and martial music is seen on board the Argo when the enchanting strains of the Thracian move even the trees "from Pelion to the main."

Transported demi-gods stood round,
 And men grew heroes at the sound,
 Inflamed with glory's charms;
 Each chief his seven-fold shield displayed,
 And half unsheathed the shining blade;
 And seas, and rocks, and skies rebound,
 To arms! to arms! to arms!

But the power of music is most shown when the hero descends into Hades in search of his lost wife Eurydice. All the denizens of hell are charmed by his music; and they cease their employments and forget their punishments while listening to the strains issuing from his golden lyre.

He sung, and hell consented
 To hear the poet's prayer;
 Stern Proserpine relented,
 And gave him back the fair.
 Thus song could prevail
 O'er death and o'er hell,
 A conquest how hard and how glorious!

But the lover's impatience undoes what his music had accomplished for him, and Eurydice is lost.

Now under hanging mountains,
 Beside the falls of fountains,

Or where Hebrus wanders,
 Rolling in meanders,
 All alone,
 Unheard, unknown,
 He makes his moan;
 And calls her ghost,
 For ever, ever, ever lost!

* * * *

And even in death Eurydice he sung,
 Eurydice still trembled on his tongue,
 Eurydice the woods,
 Eurydice the floods,
 Eurydice the rocks and hollow mountains rung.

It was thus that music was able to soften pain, to charm grief, to disarm rage, and to make our earthly joys antedate our heavenly bliss. It was the mission of the divine Cecilia to perfect it; and she produced such wondrous strains of harmony that not only were the fates appeased and men enraptured by the sound,

But angels lean from heaven to hear.

Of Orpheus now no more let poets tell,
 To bright Cecilia greater power is given;
 His numbers raised a shade from hell,
 Hers lift the soul to heaven.

Dr. Johnson, writing of this ode, says: "In it the author is generally confessed to have miscarried; yet he has miscarried only as compared with Dryden, for he has far out-gone other competitors. Dryden's plan is better chosen; history will always take stronger hold of the passions than fable: the passions excited by Dryden are the pleasures and pains of real life; the scene of Pope is laid in imaginary existence; Pope is read with calm acquiescence, Dryden with turbulent delight; Pope hangs upon the ear, Dryden finds the passes of the mind. Both the odes want the essential constituent of metrical compositions, *the stated recurrence of settled numbers*. . . . If Pope's

ode be particularly inspected, it will be found that the first stanza consists of sounds, well chosen, indeed, but only sounds. The second consists of hyperbolical commonplaces, easily to be found, and, perhaps, without much difficulty to be as well expressed. In the third, however, there are numbers, images, harmony, and vigor not unworthy the antagonist of Dryden. Had all been like this—but every part cannot be the best. The next stanzas place and detain us in the dark and dismal regions of mythology; . . . we have all that can be performed by elegance of diction or sweetness of versification; but what can form avail without better matter? The last stanza again refers to commonplaces. The conclusion is too evidently modeled by that of Dryden; and it may be remarked that both end with the same fault—the comparison of each is literal on one side and metaphorical on the other. Poets do not always express their own thoughts. Pope, with all this labor in the praise of music, was ignorant of its principles and insensible of its effects.”

William Collins's *Ode on the Passions* is well known, but it is inferior in point of excellence to some other odes by the same author. It is interesting to compare it with the masterpieces of Dryden and Pope, mentioned above, to which it bears little resemblance, save as to subject-matter. Collins's most labored effort is his *Ode on Liberty*, which is constructed after the ancient models, and divided into strophe, antistrophe, and epodes. The first part of this poem contains some really noble thoughts, grandly expressed; but as it proceeds, it grows gradually feebler and feebler, until, at the end, it dwindles into a complete failure. The following short ode is often quoted:

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blessed!
When spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
 By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
 There Honor comes, a pilgrim gray,
 To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
 And Freedom shall awhile repair,
 To dwell, a weeping hermit, there.

The *Ode to Evening* is the finest of all of Collins's poems. It is written in a peculiar metre, and without rhyme; but so faithful and picturesque are the images which it presents to our mind's eye, that the sights and sounds of evening seem almost to be actually presented. "The whole poem seems dropping with dew and breathing the fragrance of the hour. It resembles a melody of Schubert."

The poet Gray was the author of several odes, the first and one of the finest of which is the *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*. *The Bard* is a Pindaric ode, constructed strictly according to rules, and consisting of three parts,—strophe, antistrophe, and epodes,—each of three stanzas. His ode on the *Progress of Poesy* is similarly constructed. In this poem he gives a rapid and brilliant sketch of the progress of poetry from the earliest times to the days of Dryden. Of Shakspeare, he says:

To him the mighty mother did unveil
 Her awful face; the dauntless child
 Stretch'd forth his little arms and smiled.
 "This pencil take (she said), whose colors clear
 Richly paint the vernal year:
 Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
 This can unlock the gates of joy!
 Of horror that, and thrilling fears,
 Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears."

Of Milton, he says:

He passed the flaming bounds of place and time;
 The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
 Where angels tremble while they gaze,
 He saw; but, blasted with excess of light,
 Closed his eyes in endless night.

In connection with this poem the student should read Collins's *Ode to Simplicity* and Keats's *Sleep and Poetry*. Two of Gray's odes, *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin*, relate to Scandinavian subjects. They are the first instances in our literature of a poet seeking inspiration from the myths and legends of our northern ancestors.

Shelley's *Ode to Liberty* may well be read in connection with that of Collins's just mentioned, although there is not the slightest resemblance in the two poets' treatment of the same subject. Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* and *Ode to Naples* are worthy of study. Coleridge's *Ode on France* was regarded by Shelley as the finest ode in the English language. Swinburne says it is Coleridge's best. It begins with an apostrophe to liberty.

Ye Clouds! that far above me float and pause,
 Whose pathless march no mortal may control!
 Ye Ocean-Waves! that wheresoe'er ye roll,
 Yield homage only to eternal laws!
 Ye Woods! that listen to the night-bird's singing,
 Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,
 Save when your own imperious branches swinging,
 Have made a solemn music of the wind!
 Where like a man beloved of God,
 Through glooms which never woodman trod,
 How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
 My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I wound,
 Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,
 By each rude shape, and wild unconquerable sound!
 O ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests high!
 And O ye Clouds that far above ne soar'd!
 Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!
 Yea, everything that is and will be free!
 Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
 With what deep worship I have still adored
 The spirit of divinest liberty.

Coleridge's *Ode to the Departing Year*, although plainly inferior to the above, contains some fine passages and

beautiful conceptions. Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale* and *Ode on a Grecian Urn* will repay study, as also, though in a less degree, will the *Ode to Winter*, by Thomas Campbell, and the *Ode to Superstition*, by Samuel Rogers.

Among Wordsworth's poems we find two odes, both of considerable merit. The *Ode to Duty* is probably the better of the two, although the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* is the more popular. The sentiments expressed in the latter, in regard to the pre-existence of the soul, remind us of those in the poem previously quoted from Henry Vaughan.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting ;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar ;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home :
Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows
He sees it in his joy ;
The Youth, who daily farthest from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended ;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

7. *Elegies*.—An elegy is a lyrical poem of a mournful character, usually having reference to the death of some person or persons dear to the author. Jacobi says: "If I were to give a sensible image of elegy, I should not paint her, as many have done, in long robes of sorrow, with disheveled hair and a veiled brow, weeping over a coffin. I would rather represent her as a nymph, seated placidly,

with her head upon her hand, full of feeling and contemplation. On her neglected locks should hang a torn garland, and in her lap should lie a wreath of faded flowers. A tomb should appear in the distance, half-concealed by a dark grove of cypress. Behind should rise a hill full of budding roses, and illumined with the rays of the rising sun."

There are many beautiful examples of elegy in the English language. One of the oldest and best is Spenser's *Astrophel*, a pastoral elegy on the death of Sir Philip Sidney. It was written about 1587. The entire elegy consists of four parts: *Astrophel*; *The Doleful Lay of Clorinda*; *The Mourning Muse of Thestylis*; and a *Pastorall Aeglogue*. In the first part, the elegy proper, the poet describes the character of the friend for whom he mourns, and tells of the manner of his death.

A gentle shepherd born in Arcady,
Of gentlest race that every shepherd bore,
About the grassy banks of Haemony,
Did keep his sheep, his little stock and store.
Full carefully he kept them day and night,
In fairest fields; and *Astrophel* he hight.

After his death, he and Stella, to whom he had "vowed the service of his daies," are transformed into a flower:

Into one flowre that is both red and blue:
It first grows red, and then to blue doth fade,
Like *Astrophel*, which thereinto was made.

And in the midst thereof a star appeares,
As fairly formed as any star in skyes:
Resembling Stella in her freshest yeares,
Forth darting beams of beautie from her eyes;
And all the day it standeth full of dew,
Which is the teares that from her eyes did flow.

Then every one who had known the gentle shepherd came forward and

Gan dight themselves t' express their inward woe,
 With dolefull layes unto the time addrest.
 But first his sister that Clorinda hight,
 The gentlest shepherdesse that lives this day,
 And most resembling both in shape and spright,
 Her brother deare, began this dolefull lay.
 Which, least I marre the sweetnesse of the vearse,
 In sort as she it sung I will rehearse.

The Clorinda here referred to was the accomplished Mary, Countess of Pembroke, the sister of Sidney. It is not improbable that the *Lay* which follows was written by the countess herself. We copy the last two stanzas :

There liveth he in everlasting bliss,
 Sweet Spirit never fearing more to die;
 Ne dreading harme from any foes of his,
 Ne fearing salvage beasts more crueltie.
 Whilst we here, wretches, waile his private lack,
 And with vaine vows do often call him back.

But live thou there, still happie, happie Spirit,
 And give us leave thee here thus to lament!
 Not thee that doest thy heavens joy inherit,
 But our owne selves that here in dole are drent.
 Thus do we weep and waile, and wear our eyes,
 Mourning, in others, our owne miseries.

Then Thestylis continues the complaint, beginning with the following invocation :

Come forth, ye Nymphs, come forth, forsake your watry bowres,
 Forsake your mossy caves, and help me to lament:
 Help me to tune my dolefull notes to gurgling sound
 Of Liffies tumbling streams: Come, let salt teares of oures
 Mix with his waters fresh. O come, let one consent
 Join us to mourne with wailfull plaints the deadly wound
 Which fatall clap hath made; decreed by higher powers.

The Pastoral Aeglogue is a colloquy between two shepherds, Lycon and Colin, upon the death of Sidney, who is here called Phillisides.

Lycon.—Phillisides is dead. O dolefull ryme!

* * * * *
 Lo, father Neptune, with sad countenance,
 How he sits mourning on the strond now bare,
 Yonder, where th' Ocean with his rolling waves
 The white feete washeth (wailing his mischance)
 Of Dover cliffes. His sacred skirt about
 The sea-gods all are set; from their moist caves
 All for his comfort gathered there they be.
 The Thamis rich, the Humber rough and stout,
 The fruitfull Severne, with the rest are come
 To help their lord to mourne, and eke to see
 The dolefull sight, and sad pomp funerall,
 Of the dead corps passing through his kingdome.
 And all their heads, with cypress garlands crown'd
 With wofull shrikes salute him great and small.
 Eke wailfull Echo, forgetting her deare
 Narcissus, their last accents doth resound.

Colin.—Phillisides is dead. O luckless age;
 O widow world; O brookes and fountains clear;
 O hills, O dales, O woods, that oft have rong
 With his sweet caroling, which could assuage
 The fiercest wrath of tygre or of beare:
 Ye Sylvans, Fauns, and Satyrs, that among
 These thickets oft have daunst after his pipe;
 Ye Nymphs and Nayades with golden heare
 That oft have left your purest cristall springs
 To harken to his layes, that couldn wipe
 Away all grieve and sorrow from your hearts;
 Alas! who now is left that like him sings?
 When shall you heare againe like harmonie?
 So sweet a sownd who to you now imparts?

* * * * *
Lycon.—Phillisides is dead. O happie sprite
 That now in heaven with blessed souls doest bide:
 Looke down awhile from where thou sitst above,
 And see how busie shepherds be t' endite
 Sad songs of grief, their sorrows to declare,
 And grateful memory of their kind love.
 * * * * *

Colin.—The sun (lo!) hastened hath his face to steep
 In western waves; and th' aire with stormy shoures
 Warnes us to drive homewards our silly sheep:
 Lycon, lett's rise, and take of them good keep.

After reading this elegy, there is little difficulty in recognizing the source from which Milton, fifty years later, drew a part of the inspiration for his pastoral elegy of *Lycidas*. *Lycidas* is a monody on the death of Edward King, a friend of Milton's, who perished by shipwreck on his passage from Chester to Dublin in 1637. Young King was a fellow of Milton's own college,—Christ's, at Cambridge,—and had been destined for the church. The name *Lycidas* signifies purity or whiteness; it is also the name of a shepherd in Virgil's third *Eclogue*; and the resemblance in sound to that of the *Phyllisides* of Spenser is, to say the least, worthy of remark. Like Spenser's *Astrophel*, the poem is written in the form of a pastoral. The poet begins by explaining that the sad occasion which his verses are intended to commemorate has forced him to write even before those laurels which he was destined to gather were ready to be plucked.

For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
 Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:
 Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
 Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
 He must not float upon his watery bier
 Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
 Without the meed of some melodious tear.

As Spenser, in the *Complaint of Thestylis*, invokes the Nymphs, so Milton invokes the Muses:

Begin then, Sisters of the sacred well,
 That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
 Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string;
 Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
 So may some gentle Muse

With lucky words favor my destin'd urn ;
And, as he passes, turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud.

He describes, then, in allegorical terms, their life at college together, their studies, and their delight in music and poetry.

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
Temper'd to the oaten flute ;
Rough Satyrs danc'd, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long ;
And old Damoetas loved to hear our song.

* * * * *

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Clos'd o'er the head of your loved Lycidas ?
For neither were ye playing on the steep,
Where your old bards the famous Druids lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream.

But why does he ask concerning the whereabouts of the Nymphs? They would have been powerless to save Lycidas from his watery grave. Not even the Muse, the mother of Orpheus, was able to rescue her son from death at the hands of the enraged Thracian women. Alas! what boots it to labor, diligently and with self-denial, through youth and early manhood, only to die before the goal of fame is reached?

Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?

But Milton replies that fame, which is "the spur that the clear spirit doth raise to scorn delights and live laborious days," should not be our sole aspiration in this life; for just as our merits are, of so much fame in heaven will be our meed.

But now my oat proceeds,
 And listens to the herald of the sea,
 That came in Neptune's plea.
 He ask'd the waves, and ask'd the felon winds,
 What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain?
 And question'd every gust of rugged wings
 That blows from off each beaked promontory.
 They knew not of his story:
 And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
 That not a blast was from their dungeon stray'd:
 The air was calm, and on the level brine
 Sleek Panope with all her sisters play'd.

Then Camus, the genius of Cambridge, makes mournful inquiry for his "dearest pledge." Lastly, St. Peter, the typical head of the church, comes forward and upbraids the false pastors, who care only for the spoils of the church, and not for the good of their flocks, and shove away God's faithful ministers from their places.

The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
 But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:
 Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
 Daily devours apace, and nothing said:
 But that two-handed engine at the door
 Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.

Then, by a skillful transition, the poet returns to his theme and to the level of his pastoral verse. The exquisite description which follows of the flowers which he bids to be brought

To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies,

is full of beauty. There is nothing like it anywhere, save a passage in Shakspeare's *Winter's Tale*, almost as fine, and one in Drayton's *Polyolbion*.* Some of the closing

* See *The Winter's Tale*, Act IV., Scene iii.; also Drayton's *Polyolbion*, Song XV., l. 147.

lines remind us forcibly of the quotation we have made from Spenser's *Pastoral Aefhlogue*.

There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops and sweet societies
That sing, and singing in their glory, move,
And wipe the tears forever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

* * * * *

And now the sun had stretch'd out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay:
At last, he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blue;
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

In regard to Milton's indebtedness to Spenser, we quote the following from M. Taine:

"'Milton has acknowledged to me,' writes Dryden, 'that Spenser was his original.' In fact, by the purity and elevation of their morals, by the fullness and connection of their style, by the noble, chivalric sentiments, and their fine classical arrangement, they are brothers. But Milton had yet other masters, Beaumont, Fletcher, Burton, Drummond, Ben Jonson, Shakspeare, the whole splendid English Renaissance, and behind it the Italian poesy, Latin antiquity, the fine Greek literature, and all the sources whence the English Renaissance sprang. He continued the great current, but in a manner of his own. He took their mythology, their allegories, sometimes their conceits, and discovered anew their rich coloring, their magnificent sentiment of living nature, their inexhaustible admiration of forms and colors. But, at the same time, he transformed their diction, and employed poetry in a new service."

Dr. Johnson, writing of *Lycidas*, says: "In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral; easy,

vulgar, and therefore disgusting; whatever images it can supply are long ago exhausted; and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. . . . This poem has yet a grosser fault. With these trifling fictions are mingled the most awful and sacred truths, such as ought never to be polluted with such irreverent combinations. The shepherd, likewise, is now a feeder of sheep, and afterwards an ecclesiastical pastor, a superintendent of a Christian flock. Such equivocations are always unskillful; but here they are indecent, and, at least, approach to impiety, of which, however, I believe the writer not to have been conscious. Such is the power of reputation justly acquired, that its blaze drives away the eye from nice examination. Surely no man could have fancied that he read *Lycidas* with pleasure, had he not known the author."

Hazlitt says: "Of all Milton's smaller poems, *Lycidas* is the greatest favorite with me. . . . It is the fine emanation of classical sentiment in a youthful scholar—'most musical, most melancholy.' A certain tender gloom overspreads it, a wayward abstraction, a forgetfulness of his subject in the serious reflections that arise out of it. The gusts of passion come and go like the sounds of music borne on the wind."

Well worthy to be compared with *Lycidas* and *Astrophel* is *Adonais*, an elegy written by Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1821 in honor of the poet John Keats. It, too, is of the pastoral character, and is modeled in some degree after the beautiful Greek idyl of Moschus, upon the death of Bion. It has been characterized as a "shimmer of beautiful regret, full of arbitrary though harmonious and delicate fancies." We copy the first and the last stanza:

I weep for Adonais—he is dead!
 Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
 Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
 And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
 To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,

And teach them thine own sorrow ; say—with me
Died Adonais !—till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity !

* * * * *

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me ; my spirit's bark is driven
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given ;
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven :
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar ;
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

If Shelley had written nothing else, this poem alone would have proven his right to a place among the greatest poets of his age. W. M. Rossetti, speaking of Shelley, says: "The poetic ecstasy took him constantly upwards, and the higher he got, the more thoroughly did his thoughts and words become one exquisite and intense unit. With elevation of meaning and splendor and beauty of perception, he combined the most searching, the most inimitable loveliness of verse-music; and he stands at this day, and, perhaps, will always remain, the poet who, by instincts of verbal selection and charm of sound, comes nearest to expressing the half-inexpressible—the secret things of beauty, the intolerable light of the arcane."

Scarcely inferior to either of the three great elegies we have just noticed is Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, published in 1850, and written in honor of the poet's friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, who died in 1833. This poem consists of a hundred and thirty "short swallow-flights of song," written in peculiar four-lined stanzas. As each of the hundred and thirty divisions is composed of from three to five stanzas, the entire poem is of great length. George MacDonald says of it: "It is *the* poem of

the hoping doubters, *the* poem of our age. . . . It is the cry of the bereaved Psyche into the dark infinite after the vanished love. His friend is nowhere in his sight, and God is silent. Death, God's final compulsion to prayer, in its dread, its gloom, its utter stillness, its apparent nothingness, urges the cry. Moanings over the dead are mingled with the profoundest questionings of philosophy, the signs of nature, and the story of Jesus, while now and then the star of the morning, bright Phosphor, flashes a few rays through the shifting, cloudy dark. And if the sun has not arisen on the close of the book, yet the aurora of the coming dawn gives light enough to make the onward journey possible and hopeful." Another critic says: "It has been said that *In Memoriam* is tinctured with skepticism. The skepticism, if any, is only that which is found in the religious writings of all those men who, to enhance the greater certainty, treat the lesser as none at all, who, because the next world is so true, resolve that this shall be only a dream, and so, because they throw doubt upon that which is seen and known, are scarcely credited when they explain that they do so only to magnify the undoubtfulness of that which is invisible and unknown. The poem is a dream; it is a progress of feelings, not of action; it is, moreover, a process where the change is said to be brought about by an external influence, and not to be due only to internal self-development. Even the poetry itself is attributed to a force over which the poet has no control:

"I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing."

We quote the following extract from this remarkable poem:

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
 Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust ;
 And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
 And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
 And men the flies of latter spring,
 That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,
 And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
 To point the term of human strife,
 And on the low, dark verge of life,
 The twilight of eternal day.

Tennyson's *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*
 may take rank among the grandest elegies in our language.

Bury the Great Duke
 With an empire's lamentation,
 Let us bury the Great Duke
 To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
 Mourning when their leaders fall,
 Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
 And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

* * * * *
 Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears ;
 The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears :
 The black earth yawns : the mortal disappears ;
 Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;
 He is gone who seemed so great.
 Gone ; but nothing can bereave him
 Of the force he made his own
 Being here, and we believe him
 Something far advanced in state,
 And that he wears a truer crown
 Than any wreath that man can weave him.
 But speak no more of his renown,
 Lay your earthly fancies down,
 And in the vast cathedral leave him.
 God accept him, Christ receive him.

Very different in character, but of a beauty simpler and far more exquisite, is the famous *Elegy Written in a Country Church-yard*, by Thomas Gray (1750).

I make no quotation from this inimitable masterpiece, as no adequate idea of its beauties can be derived from detached extracts. The student should study with care and thoroughness the entire poem. It is entirely original, both as to matter and execution; it is free from classicisms, and possesses rare simplicity throughout. Dr. Johnson says: "It abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas beginning, 'Yet even these bones,' are to me original. I have never seen the notions in any other place; yet he that reads them here persuades himself that he has always felt them. Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame and useless to praise him."

Pope's *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady* is not without its beauties, but it is marred by that artificiality of tone and that lack of true feeling and tenderness so characteristic of its author.

The following lines will serve for illustration:

What beckoning ghost along the moonlight shade
Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?
'Tis she!—but why that bleeding bosom gored
Why dimly gleams the visionary sword?
Oh, ever beauteous, ever friendly! tell,
Is it, in heaven, a crime to love too well?
To bear too tender or too firm a heart,
To act a lover's or a Roman's part?
Is there no bright reversion in the sky,
For those who greatly think, or bravely die?

* * * * *

So peaceful rests, without a stone, a name,
What once had beauty, titles, wealth, and fame.
How loved, how honor'd once, avails thee not,
To whom related, or by whom begot;

A heap of dust alone remains of thee,
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be !

Compared with the unaffected but impassioned strains which we have found in the elegies of Spenser, Milton, and Shelley, this effusion not only sounds tame, it is almost offensive. We turn for relief to the simple dirge sung in *Cymbeline* over the supposed dead body of Imogen.

Fear no more the heat o' th' sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages ;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages ;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' th' great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke ;
Care no more to clothe, and eat ;
To thee the reed is as the oak :
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor th' all-dreaded thunder-stone ;
Fear not slander, censure rash ;
Thou hast finish'd joy and moan ;
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee !
Nor no witchcraft charm thee !
Ghost unlaid forbear thee !
Nothing ill come near thee !
Quiet consummation have ;
And renowned be thy grave ! *

The poet William Collins has made the following beautiful version of this touching dirge :

* Shakspeare: *Tragedy of Cymbeline*, Act IV., Scene ii.

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
 Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
 Each opening sweet, of earliest bloom,
 And rifle all the breathing Spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear
 To vex with shrieks this quiet grove ;
 But shepherd lads assemble here,
 And melting virgins own their love.

No wither'd witch shall here be seen,
 No goblins lead their nightly crew ;
 The female fays shall haunt the green,
 And dress thy grave with pearly dew.

The red-breast oft at evening hours
 Shall kindly lend his little aid,
 With hoary moss and gather'd flowers,
 To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds, and beating rain,
 In tempests shake thy sylvan cell ;
 Or 'midst the chase, on every plain,
 The tender thought on thee shall dwell.

Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
 For thee the tear be duly shed ;
 Belov'd, till life can charm no more ;
 And mourned, till Pity's self be dead.

Of other poems of an elegiac character, the following are worthy of notice : *Elegies*, by William Shenstone, "a series of poetical truths devoid of poetical expression;" *The Castaway*, by William Cowper; *The Song of Harold*, in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*; *Thanatopsis*, by William Cullen Bryant.

In taking leave of this subject, we quote the epitaph of Sir Walter Raleigh, said to have been written by himself the night before his execution :

Even such is Time, that takes on trust
 Our youth, our joys, our all we have, .
 And pays us but with age and dust ;
 Who, in the dark and silent grave,
 When we have wandered all our ways,
 Shuts up the story of our days.
 But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
 The Lord shall raise me up, I trust.

8. *Miscellaneous Lyrics*.—William Drummond, of Hawthornden, was the author of a large number of lyrics upon almost every variety of subjects. We have already alluded to his love-songs. In 1616 he published a collection of verses in a volume entitled *Poems: Amorous, Funerall, Divine, Pastorall, in Sonnets, Songs, Sertains, Madrigals*. His poems, although now almost forgotten, are written in the purest, most elegant English of that period; but he has borrowed largely from the Italian and Spanish poets. There is some fine imagery in the following song:

Phœbus, arise, . .
 And paint the sable skies
 With azure, white, and red ;
 Rouse Memnon's mother from her Tithon's bed,
 That she thy càreer may with roses spread ;
 The nightingales thy coming each where sing ;
 Make an eternal spring,
 Give life to this dark world which lieth dead ;
 Spread forth thy golden hair
 In larger locks than thou wast wont before,
 And, emperor like, decore
 With diadem of pearl thy temples fair :
 Chase hence the ugly night,
 Which serves but to make dear thy glorious light.
 This is that happy morn,
 That day, long-wished day,
 Of all my life so dark
 (If cruel stars have not my ruin sworn,
 And fates not hope betray),

Which, only white, deserves
 A diamond for ever should it mark :
 This is the morn should bring unto this grove
 My love, to hear and recompense my love.
 Fair king, who all preserves,
 But show thy blushing beams,
 And thou two sweeter eyes
 Shalt see, than those which by Peneus' streams
 Did once thy heart surprise ;
 Nay, suns, which shine as clear
 As thou when two thou did to Rome appear.
 Now, Flora, deck thyself in fairest guise ;
 If that ye, winds, would hear
 A voice surpassing far Amphion's lyre,
 Your stormy chiding stay ;
 Let zephyr only breathe,
 And with her tresses play,
 Kissing sometimes these purple ports of death.
 The winds all silent are,
 And Phoebus in his chair,
 Ensaffroning sea and air,
 Makes vanish every star :
 Night like a drunkard reels
 Beyond the hills to shun his flaming wheels ;
 The fields with flow'rs are deck'd in every hue,
 The clouds bespangle with bright gold their blue :
 Here is the pleasant place,
 And every thing, save her, who all should grace.

Several Scotch poets are deserving of mention as the writers of pleasant songs on a variety of subjects, but chiefly relating to peasant life. The first of these was Allan Ramsay, elsewhere mentioned as the editor of a collection of poems called *The Evergreen*, 1724. Another collection issued the same year, and entitled *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, contains several poems of his own composition. He tells us that his desire to write poetry had been inspired by the reading of Watson's *Choice Collection of Scots Songs, Ancient and Modern*. In the work which he did for Scotch

poetry, Ramsay imitated Watson, "collecting, adapting and publishing ancient poems, and getting ingenious friends to assist him in the production of modern poems." Some of his own poems are admirable examples of homely Scotch lyrics. They are characterized by the broad fun, the quaint touches of humor, the pleasant vein of satire, by which Ramsay sought to entertain his audience of peasants, plow-boys, and shepherds, and his more critical companions of the "Easy Club."

His *Bessie Bell and Mary Gray* and *The Lass o' Patie's Mill* are among his pleasantest songs. His *Lochaber No More* is full of pathos and manly feeling:

Farewell to Lochaber, and farewell my Jean,
Where heartsome with thee I've mony day been;
For Lochaber no more, Lochaber no more,
We'll maybe return to Lochaber no more.
These tears that I shed they are a' for my dear,
And no for the dangers attending on wear;
Though bore on rough seas to a far bloody shore,
Maybe to return to Lochaber no more.

Though hurricanes rise, and rise every wind,
They'll ne'er make a tempest like that in my mind;
Though loudest of thunder on louder waves roar,
That's naething like leaving my love on the shore.
To leave thee behind me my heart is sair pained;
By ease that's inglorious no fame can be gained;
And beauty and love's the reward of the brave,
And I must deserve it before I can crave.

Then glory, my Jeany, man plead my excuse;
Since honor commands me, how can I refuse?
Without it I ne'er can have merit for thee,
And without thy favor I'd better not be.
I gae then, my lass, to win honor and fame,
And if I should luck to come gloriously hame,
I'll bring a heart to thee with love running o'er
And then I'll leave thee and Lochaber no more.

The poems of Robert Fergusson are remarkable as having furnished models for some of the songs of Burns. They were collected in a single small volume, and published in 1773. We shall be interested in comparing Burns's poems with those of his predecessor; not that Fergusson possessed anything of the genius of Burns, but because we shall discover, in the best works of the latter, evident traces of the influence of the younger poet. *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, of Burns, was suggested by the *Farmer's Ingle*, of Fergusson; and Fergusson's ode *To the Gowdspink* may well be compared with Burns's *Lines to a Mountain Daisy*. Fergusson's *Address to the Tron-Kirk Bell*, his *Braid Claith*, and *Cauler Water*, are among his pleasantest songs. The opening stanzas of *Cauler Water* will serve as a specimen of his humor, and also of his favorite form of verse:

When father Adie first pat spade in
 The bonnie yard o' ancient Eden,
 His amry had nae liquor laid in
 To fire his mou;
 Nor did he thole his wife's upbraidin'
 For bein fou.

A cauler burn o' siller sheen,
 Ran cannily out owre the green;
 And when our gutcher's drouth had been
 To bide right sair,
 He loutit down, and drank bedeen
 A dainty skair.

His bairns had a' before the flood,
 A langer tack o' flesh and blood,
 And on mair pithy shanks they stood
 Than Noah's line,
 Wha still hae been a freckless brood,
 Wi' drinkin' wine.

We have already spoken of Robert Burns as the greatest song-writer of our literature, and have noticed his love-

poems and his patriotic lyrics. His *Address to the Deil* is written in the same style as the poems of Fergusson, just noticed, and so, also, is his *Bard's Epitaph*. Of his numerous other lyrics, we mention but a few, and these the student is advised to study: *My Heart's in the Highlands*; *Flow Gently, Sweet Afton*; *A Man's a Man for a' that*; *Auld Lang Syne*; *Macpherson's Farewell*; *Man was Made to Mourn*. A critic has recently said: "Burns lives above all, and is destined to live, in his songs. . . . He inherited from his poetical ancestry a wealth, not of hymns, but of songs and ballads, chiefly, of course, amatory. They inspired him with harmonies, compared with which they are themselves harsh and out of tune; the inimitable airs to which they were sung were reverberated from his mind in words in which there is the very soul of melody. In this process of transmitting what he received from the past to the future, to which he looked forward as a better day for all mankind, he changed, as regards morality, silver into gold, dirt into the fragrance of lilies and violets, foul dirt into the breath of meadows and of shady paths through woods and by the banks of murmuring streams. . . . Judged by his songs, Burns's fame has little to fear from any question being raised as to whether the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the instance of his poetry is really what it seems—a tree that is good for food and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise."

William Blake, one of the most remarkable persons known to our literature, was the author of several lyrical poems, some of decided merit. His *Songs of Innocence* were published in 1787, and the companion volume, *Songs of Experience*, in 1794. The manner in which these books were issued was peculiar. The text of the poems and the pictorial illustrations were all blended in one artistic design, and engraved by the author, who was also an artist. Then copies were struck off the blocks thus engraved, in sufficient numbers to meet every demand. There is in Blake's poetry a charming, child-like simplicity, the like of

which is scarcely to be found elsewhere in our literature. It possesses all the beauty of nature, simple, uncultivated, unpremeditated. Secluding himself from men, and remaining aloof from the concerns and cares which distract most mortals, he was enabled to perform his work in absolute independence of all models, whether of predecessors or of contemporaries. A single specimen of his poems, the Introduction to his *Songs of Innocence*, is all that we can give:

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a lamb:"
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again:"
So I piped; he wept to hear

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe,
Sing thy songs of happy cheer:"
So I sung the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read"—
So he vanished from my sight;
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs,
Every child may joy to hear.

John G. Whittier is the American lyricist. He is a man of deep convictions and strong emotions, and he speaks his feelings passionately, fearlessly. His songs are, in the broadest sense, national. In *ante-bellum* days, he sang of slavery, and pleaded strenuously, persistently, for the oppressed negroes. His volume of lyrics and other poems

relating to slavery was published in 1849, under the title of *Voices of Freedom*. These verses doubtless exerted a strong influence towards advancing the cause of abolitionism and emancipation. In the following year (1850) he lifted up his voice in favor of the workingman, and issued a volume entitled *Songs of Labor*. Of this volume, an English critic, not altogether pleased with his championship of the anti-slavery party, says: "His tender sympathy and unvarying kindness in all that concerns the labors and distress of mankind attract and secure our approval more than his froward, needless, and valueless partisanship in verse repels us." His *War Lyrics*, published in 1865, are, as a matter of course, intensely partisan, but some of them are full of the finest poetic feeling. The old hatred of slavery still exists, and is the burden of almost every song:

In vain the bells of war shall ring
 Of triumphs and revenges,
 While still is spared the evil thing
 That severs and estranges.
 But blest the ear
 That yet shall hear
 The jubilant bell
 That rings the knell
 Of slavery forever!

Then let the selfish lips be dumb,
 And hushed the breath of sighing;
 Before the joy of peace, must come
 The pains of purifying.
 God give us grace
 Each in his place
 To bear his lot
 And murmuring not
 Endure and wait and labor.

Many of Whittier's miscellaneous pieces are of a decidedly high degree of poetic merit, and will take rank among the best lyrics in our language. They are so

numerous that we shall make no attempt at specification, but direct the reader to the complete works of the poet, from which he will be at no loss to select the best.

Songs Before Sunrise is the title of a volume of poems published by Algernon Charles Swinburne in 1871. No poems in our language possess more real genuine music than is exhibited in some of these songs. In them Swinburne's varied and remarkable lyrical powers are shown at their best. "The conflict of day with night before the sunrise of freedom is rehearsed in two-score pieces, which chant the democratic uprising of Continental Europe and the outbreak in Crete." "The one faculty," says Stedman, "in which Swinburne excels any living English poet, is his miraculous gift of rhythm, his command over the unsuspected sources of a language. Before the advent of Swinburne, we did not realize the full scope of English verse. In his hands it is like the violin of Paganini. The range of his fantasias, roulades, arias, new effects of measure and sound, is incomparable with anything hitherto known. The first emotion of one who studies even his immature work is that of wonder at the freedom and richness of his diction, the su-surrus of his rhythm, his unconscious alliterations, the endless change of his syllabic harmonies, resulting in the alternate softness and strength, height and fall, riotous or chastened music, of his affluent verse. In his poetry we discover qualities we did not know were in the language—a softness that seemed Italian, a rugged strength we thought was German, a blithe and *débonnaire* lightness we despaired of capturing from the French. It is safe to declare that at last a time has come when the force of expression can no farther go. I do not say it has not gone too far. The fruit may be, and here is, too luscious; the flower is often of an odor too intoxicating to endure. Yet what execution! The voice may not be equal to the grandest music, nor trained and restrained as it should be. But the voice is there, and its possessor has the finest natural organ to which this generation has listened."

REFERENCES.

COLLATERAL READING.

IN connection with the subject of ballads, study the social condition of England during the Transition Period. For information, refer to Knight's, Hume's, Lingard's, or any other standard *History of England*. Read James's *History of Chivalry*, and Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. Study the history of the Scotch border.. Read Jane Porter's *Scottish Chiefs*; Scott's *Fair Maid of Perth*, *The Legend of Montrose*, and *Old Mortality*.

LITERARY STUDIES.

BALLADS: For collections of ballads, see Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (Bohn); Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*; Jamieson's *Popular Ballads and Songs*; Chambers's *The Scottish Ballads*; Bell's *Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England* (1857); Aytoun's *Ballads of Scotland* (1861); Allingham's *The Ballad Book*; Child's *Collection of Ballads* (1857-59).

SONNETS: See *The Book of the Sonnet*, by Leigh Hunt; Dennis's *English Sonnets*; French's *Dublin Afternoon Lectures*; Stedman's *Victorian Poets*; Massey's *Shakspeare's Sonnets and his Private Friends*; Henry Brown's *Sonnets of Shakspeare Solved*. See, also, references elsewhere given to Petrarch, the Troubadours, Trouvères, etc.

ELEGIES: For *Astrophel* and *Lycidas*, see other references, respectively, to Spenser and Milton. For *Adonais*, see Hutton's *Essays*, and references elsewhere given to Shelley. For *In Memoriam*, see F. W. Robertson's *Analysis of In Memoriam* (1862). For Gray's *Elegy*, see Johnson's *Life of Gray* (in *Lives of the Poets*); Hazlitt's *English Poets*; Roscoe's *Essays*; Drake's *Literary Hours* (1798); and Brydges's *Censura Literaria* (1805).

LYRICS IN GENERAL: For choice specimens and extracts, see Ward's *English Poets*; Appleton's *Library of British Poets*; *The Family Library of British Poets*; *The Fireside Library of British Poets*; Chambers's *Cyclopedia of English Literature*.

ROBERT BURNS: See *Life and Works of Robert Burns*, by Robert Chambers (4 vols., 1859); *Burns*, by Principal Shairp (*English Men of Letters*); *Works of Professor Wilson*; Carlyle's *Essay on Burns*; Hazlitt's *English Poets*.

JAMES HOGG: See Wilson's *Noctes Ambrosianæ*.

MISCELLANEOUS AND ADDITIONAL: Consult Hallam's *Literature of Europe*. Find specimens and extracts in the works of Shelley, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Mrs. Browning, Tennyson, Mrs. Sigourney, Swinburne, Whittier, and others.

CHAPTER X.

SATIRICAL POETRY.

Definition and Classification—John Skelton—Why Come Ye not to Court?—Speake Parrot—Barclay's Shyp of Fooles—Wyatt and Surrey—The Steele Glass, by Gascoigne—Donne—Joseph Hall's Satires—Butler's Hudibras—Dryden—Absalom and Achitophel—Replies by Settle and Pordage—The Medal—The Medal Reversed—The Medal of John Bayes—MacFlecknoe—Pope's Dunciad—Byron's English Bards and Scotch Reviewers—Lowell's Fable for Critics—Pope's Moral Essays—Swift's Poetry—Chatterton's Prophecy—Burns's Holy Willie's Prayer and the Holy Fair—Churchill's Satires—Peter Pindar—Moore's The Fudge Family in Paris—Trumbull's McFingall—Butler's Nothing to Wear.

"Satire has always shone among the rest,
And is the boldest way, if not the best,
To tell men freely of their faintest faults,
To laugh at their vain deeds and vainer thoughts."

DRYDEN.

SATIRICAL poetry is of three kinds: first, that which attempts to reform the morals and manners of society by exposing its vices and follies to ridicule; second, that which aims to advance the interests of one sect or party by exhibiting all others in a contemptuous or odious light; third, that which is directed against certain individuals simply for purposes of revenge, or from like unworthy motives. In satirical poetry, there is usually much bitterness and but little courtesy; it may tear down and destroy, but it seldom builds up or actively improves. It may deter men from evil by turning the world's laugh against them, but the reformation which it achieves is not one of the heart.

Satire is an important element in much of our earlier poetry. We have already given some examples under

other heads; as, *The Country of Cokaygne*, spoken of in the chapter on Transition Poetry; the allegorical poem of *Piers the Plowman*; and some of Chaucer's poems.

The first professional writer of satire in English was John Skelton, poet-laureate from 1489 to 1529. Skelton was a scholar of rather extraordinary attainments for the times in which he lived, and was for some years tutor to prince Henry, afterwards Henry VIII. Caxton wrote of him that "he hath redde Vergyle, Ovyd, Tullye, and all the other noble poets and orators, to me unknown. And also he hath redde the nine muses, and understandeth theyr musically sciences, and to whom of them eche science is appropred. I suppose he hath dronken of Elcyon's well." The great Erasmus, also, spoke of Skelton as being "the glory and light of English Literature." His earlier poems were of a serious cast, and, instead of being professedly satirical, were either allegorical or lyrical and written in a strain of pompous declamation which to us appears insupportably stiff and pedantic. He was appointed to the rectory of Diss, in Norfolk, in 1504, but having used the pulpit as a means for disseminating certain satirical and unbecoming reflections upon the mendicant orders, he is said to have been suspended from exercising the sacerdotal functions. Then his natural disposition for buffoonery and audacious ridicule found vent in numerous rhyming libels. Afterwards, in 1524, being influenced by the general demand for a reformation in church affairs, he engaged in a series of the most furious attacks upon Cardinal Wolsey himself, and it is said that for this audacity he was finally obliged to take shelter in the sanctuary of Westminster Abbey, where he was protected and entertained by the abbot Islip until his death in 1529. His comic and satirical writings have a style peculiarly their own, called Skeltonic, although it is doubtful whether it originated with Skelton. His verses are short, grotesque doggerels, with constantly recurring rhymes, cant expressions, newly-coined words, and trite quotations from the Latin and

French. The language is coarse in the extreme, abounding in obscenity and slang, equaled by no one save Rabelais, and yet, as he says,

Though my rime be ragged,
Tattered and jagged,
Rudely rain-beaten,
Rusty, moth-eaten,
If ye take welle therewith
It hath in it some pith.

One of his bitterest satires against Wolsey is entitled *Why Come Ye not to Court?* In it he boldly exposes the abuses of the court and the corruptions so prevalent in the church, but most apparent in its chief representative, the cardinal.

He is set so high
In his hierarchy
Of frantic frenesy
And foolish fantasy
That in chamber of stars
All matters their he mars,
Clapping his rod on the board,
No man dare speak a word:
For he hath all the saying
Without any renaying
He rolleth in his records:
He sayeth, "How say ye my lords?
Is not my reason good?"
Good! even good—Robin Hood.
* * * * *

. . . Once yet again
Of you I would frain,
Why come ye not to court?
To the king's court or to Hampton court?
The king's court should have the excellence
But Hampton hath pre-eminence,
And Yorkes place
With my lordes grace,

To whose magnificence
Is all the confluence,
Suits and supplications,
Embassades of all nations.

A straw
For law,
It shall be as he will.

* * * *

Howbeit the primordial
Of his wretched original
And his base progeny,
And his greasy genealogy—
He came of the sang-royal
That was cast out of a butcher's stall.

Another piece written in the same style and for a similar purpose is the *Boke of Colin Cloute*, in which a countryman is represented as speaking his mind on the condition of the country and the corruption of the bishops and high dignitaries of the church. *Speake Parrot* is another poem satirizing the men and manners of the time. It is written, not in Skeltonic metre, but in the popular seven-lined stanza of Chaucer, and the parrot is represented as speaking. Henry VIII. and Cardinal Wolsey are ridiculed as two dogs, Bo-ho and Hough-ho.

Bo-ho doth bark well, but Hough ho he ruleth the ring;
From Scarparry to Tartary renown therein doth spring,
With, "He said," and "We said," I wot not what I wot,
Quod magnus est dominus Judas Scarioth.

Since Deucalion's flood, says the parrot, "there were never seen so many noble bodies under one daw's head; so many thieves hanged and thieves nevertheless; so much prisonment for matters not worth an haw; so bold a bragging butcher, and flesh sold so dear; so many plucked partridges; so many fat quails; so mangy a mastiff cur, the great greyhound's peer; never such a filthy Gorgon, nor such an epicure."

The poem called *The Bouge of Court* is an allegorical satire in which there are some passages of genuine poetry. His descriptions of the personages of the allegory remind us of similar descriptions written at a later period by Sackville and by Spenser. For example, observe the following humorous but impressive picture of Riot:

Then I behelde how he dysguised was ;
 His hed was heavy for watchinge over night,
 His eyen blered, his face shone like a glas ;
 His gowne so shorte that it ne cover myght
 His rompe, he went so all for somer light ;
 His hose was garded with a lyste of grene,
 Yet at the knece they broken were I ween.
 His cote was checkered with patches red and blewe,
 Of Kyrkbye Kendall was his short demye ;
 And aye he sang *faith decon thou crewe* :
 His elbow bare, he ware his gerc so nye :
 His nose droppinge, his lippes were full drye .
 And by his side his whynarde, and his pouch,
 The devyll might dance therein for any crouch.

Skelton occupied a peculiar position in the history of English letters, half-way between Chaucer, whose influence he acknowledged, and the later writers of the Renaissance. As Warton remarks, it is vain to apologize for the coarseness with which his poetry is tinctured, by saying that it is merely a reflection of the manners of the age. "Skelton could not avoid acting as a buffoon in any language or in any character; he would have been a writer without decorum at any period."

M. Taine says of his satires: "They are full of political animus, sensual liveliness, English and popular instincts. They possess life, but it is a coarse life, still elementary, swarming with ignoble vermin like that which appears in a great decomposing body; a life, nevertheless, with its two great features which it is destined to display—the hatred of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is the Reformation;

the return to the senses and to the natural life, which is the Renaissance."

The Shyp of Fooles, an allegorical satire, "translated oute of Laten, Frenche, and Doch, into English tongue, by Alexander Barclay, preste and chaplen," was first printed in 1509. It is rather a paraphrase than a translation of a satire written by Sebastian Brandt, an eminent philologist of Basil, about the year 1470. From the original and two translations, one in French, the other in Latin, Barclay, by making large additions of his own, formed a poem of considerable length. The design was to ridicule the vices and follies of the age, by representing a ship freighted with fools of every kind; one hundred and thirteen several forms of folly are entered, with the author himself as their leader, or the First Fool, in the character of the Student, or Bookworm.

That in this ship the chief place I governe,
By this wide sea with foolis wandering,
The cause is plaine and easy to discerne;
Still am I busy bookes assembling,
For to have plentie it is a pleasaunt thing,
In my conceit, to have them ay at hand;
But what they meane do I not understande.

So in likewise of bookes I have a store,
But few I reade, and fewer understande;
I followe not their doctrine, nor their lore,
It is enough to beare a booke in hande:
It were too much to be in such a lande,
For to be bound to loke within the booke.
I am content on the fayre coveryng to looke.

"All ancient satirical writings," says Warton, "even those of an inferior cast, have their merit, and deserve attention, as they transmit pictures of familiar manners, and preserve popular customs. In this light, at least, Barclay's *Shyp of Fooles*, which is a general satire on the times, will be found

entertaining. Nor must it be denied that his language is more cultivated than that of many of his contemporaries, and that he contributed his share to the improvement of English phraseology."

Sir Francis Wyatt was the author of three short satires upon the morals and manners of his times. The first, *On the Mean and Sure Estate*, is illustrated by the story of the Town and Country mouse, derived from Horace. It is a close translation of the tenth satire of Alamanni, an Italian. The second is on *The Courtier's Life*, and the third on *How to Use the Court and Himself*. There is but little in these poems to claim the student's attention. The following lines will serve as an illustration of the style:

I am not now in France to judge the wine;
 With savory sauce those delicacies to feel:
 Nor yet in Spain, where one must him incline,
 Rather than to be, outwardly to seem.
 I meddle not with wits that be so fine;
 Nor Flanders cheer lets not my sight to deem
 Of black and white; nor takes my wits away
 With beastliness; such do those beasts esteem.
 Nor I am not, where truth is given in prey
 For money, poison, and treason; of some
 A common practice, used night and day.
 But I am here in Kent and Christendom,
 Among the Muses, where I read and rhyme;
 Where if thou list, mine own John Poins, to come,
 Thou shalt be judge how I do spend my time.

In style and character very different from Wyatt's satires is the little poem written by the Earl of Surrey after his trial and condemnation by a London jury in 1643.

London! hast thou accused me
 Of breach of laws? the root of strife!
 Within whose breast did boil to see,
 So fervent hot thy dissolute life;
 That even the hate of sins that grow

Within thy wicked walls so rife,
 For to break forth did convert so,
 That terror could it not repress.

* * * *

Oh! member of false Babylon!
 The shop of craft! the den of ire!
 Thy dreadful doom draws fast upon.
 Thy martyrs' blood by sword and fire,
 In heaven and earth for justice call.
 The Lord shall hear their just desire! . . .
 The flame of wrath shall on thee fall!
 With famine and pest lamentably
 Stricken shall be thy lechers all.
 Thy proud towers and turrets high,
 Enemies to God, beat stone from stone:
 Thine idols burnt that wrought iniquity:
 When none thy ruin shall bemoan;
 But render unto the righteous Lord,
 That so hath judged Babylon,
 Immortal praise with one accord.

Dr. Nott says: "Wyatt had a deeper and more accurate penetration into the characters of men than Surrey had; hence arises the difference in their satires. Surrey, in his satire against the citizens of London, deals only in reproach; Wyatt, in his, abounds with irony, and those nice touches of ridicule which make us ashamed of our faults, and therefore often effects amendment. Surrey's observation of nature was minute; but he directed it towards the works of nature in general, and the movements of the passions, rather than to the foibles and characters of men." And Hallam's remarks: "If we compare the poetry of Wyatt and Surrey with that of Barclay or Skelton, about thirty or forty years before, the difference must appear wonderful. But we should not attribute this wholly to superiority of genius. It is to be remembered that the later poets wrote in a court, and in one which, besides the aristocratic manners of chivalry, had not only imbibed a

great deal of refinement from France and Italy, but a considerable tinge of ancient literature. Their predecessors were less educated men, and they addressed a more vulgar class of readers."

The Steele Glass is the title of a satirical poem written by George Gascoigne, and published in 1576. It is the earliest example of an original English poem of considerable length written in the form of blank verse. It consists of about 1100 ten-syllabled lines, and although monotonous in style, and occasionally harsh in tone, it is, upon the whole, dignified and earnest in expression. It is a plain satire, without bitterness, upon the vices of the age; it is a "glass of burnished steel," which the author holds up to view in order that men may see themselves and their follies as they really are. For

That age is dead and vanished long ago
Which thought that steel both trusty was and true,
And needed not a foil of contraries,
But showed all things as they were in deed.
Instead whereof our curious years can find
The crystal glass which glimpseth brave and bright,
And shows the thing much better than it is,
Beguiled with foils of sundry subtle sights,
So that they seem, but covet not to be,

John Donne, called by his contemporaries the greatest preacher of the seventeenth century, was the author of some satires which have been rendered into more tuneful verse by Pope. In these poems, he pictures with far-fetched ingenuity of thought, but with singular harshness and abruptness of expression, the manners and morals of the age of James I. Donne was the founder of the school of so-called metaphysical poets, of which Wither, Quarles, Herbert, Crashaw, Habington, Waller, Davenant, and Cowley were representatives. His satires possess but little real poetical merit. The student will be better pleased with Pope's paraphrases than with the originals.

To Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich, is generally accorded the honor of being the founder of English satire. This is not because he was the first satirist in point of time, nor is it so much on account of any pre-eminent excellence possessed by his productions, but rather, we think, because he boldly laid claim to that honor himself:

I first adventure, with fool-hardy might,
To tread the steps of perilous despite;
I first adventure, follow me who list,
And be the second English satirist.

He wrote six books of satires under the general title of *Virgidemiarum*—a collection or gathering of rods. The first three books of this collection appeared in 1597, and are called *Toothless Satyrs*, *Poetical*, *Academical*, *Moral*. In 1598, the remaining three books, called *Byting Satyrs*, were published. In the following year, the six books were printed together, with the title, *Virgidemiarum, The Three Last Books of Byting Satyrs*, “corrected and amended, with some additions by J. H.”

Of the character of these satires, Warton says: “They are marked with a classical precision to which English poetry had yet rarely attained. They are replete with animation of style and sentiment. The indignation of the satirist is always the result of good sense. Nor are the thorns of severe invective unmixed with the flowers of pure poetry. The characters are delineated in strong and lively coloring, and their discriminations are touched with the masterly traces of genuine humor. The versification is equally energetic and elegant, and the fabric of the couplets approaches to the modern standard. . . . Perhaps some will think that his manner betrays too much of the laborious exactness and pedantic anxiety of the scholar and student. Ariosto, in Italian, and Regnier, in French, were now almost the only writers of satire; and I believe there had been an English translation of Ariosto’s

satires. But Hall's acknowledged patterns are Juvenal and Persius, not without some touches of the urbanity of Horace."

Hallam says: "Hall is, in fact, not only so harsh and rugged that he cannot be read with much pleasure, but so obscure in very many places that he cannot be understood at all, his lines frequently bearing no visible connection in sense or grammar with their neighbors. The stream is powerful, but turbid, and often choked. . . . His satires are praised by Campbell, as well as Warton, full as much, in my opinion, as they deserve."

And this is what Campbell says: "Hall was the master satirist of his age; obscure and quaint at times, but full of nerve and picturesque illustration. No contemporary satirist has given equal grace and dignity to moral censure."

The following short extracts will serve as illustrations of his happiest style. The first is an adaptation from Juvenal:

Time was, and that was term'd the time of gold,
When world and time were young, that now are old:
When quiet Saturn sway'd the mace of lead,
And pride was yet unborne, and yet unbred.
Time was, that whiles the autumn-fall did last,
Our hungry sires gap'd for the falling mast.
Could no unhusked acorn leave the tree,
But there was challenge made whose it might be.
And if some nice and liquorous appetite
Desired more dainty dish of rare delight,
They scal'd the stored crab with clasped knee,
Till they had sated their delicious ee.
Or search'd the hopeful thicks of hedgy-rows,
For briery berries, haws, or sourer sloes:
Or when they meant to fare the fin'st of all,
They lickt oak-leaves besprink with honey-fall.
As for the thrice three-angled beech-nut shell,
Or chestnut's armed husk, and hid kernel,
Nor squire durst touch, the law would not afford,
Kept for the court, and for the king's own board.

Their royal plate was clay, or wood, or stone,
 The vulgar, save his hand, else he had none. . . .
 But when by Ceres' housewifery and pain,
 Men learned to bury the reviving grain,
 And father Janus taught the new-found vine
 Rise on the elm, with many a friendly twine;
 And base desire bade men to delven low
 For needless metals, then gau mischief grow;
 Then farewell, fairest age!

Here is his picture of the dissatisfied countryman who wishes to turn soldier:

The sturdy plowman doth the soldier see
 All scarfed with pied colors to the knee,
 Whom Indian pillage hath made fortunate.
 And now he 'gins to loathe his former state;
 Now doth he inly scorn his Kendal-greene,
 And his patch'd cockers now despised beene;
 Nor list he now go whistling to the carre
 But sells his teeme, and setteth to the warre.
 O Warre, to them that never tried the sweete!
 When his dead mate falls groveling at his feete;
 And angry bullets whistlen at his eare,
 And his dim eyes see nought but death and drear!

Of the believer in the magic influence of the stars, he says:

His fear or hope, for plenty or for lack,
 Hangs all upon his new-year's Almanack.
 If chance once in the Spring his head should ache,
 It was foretold: "thus says mine Almanack."

And this is what he says of satire:

The satire should be like the porcupine,
 That shoots his sharp quills out in each angry line.

Perhaps the most remarkable political satire in our language is the humorous poem of *Hudibras*, written by

Samuel Butler "in the time of the late wars," and published in 1663-1678. Its object was to ridicule the cause of Puritanism—a cause which, although recently in the ascendancy, was now the object of fierce, popular indignation. The poem describes the adventures of a Puritan justice of the peace, who sallies forth with his servant Ralpho to put a stop to the follies and amusements of the common people. The name Hudibras is probably derived from that of the tutelary saint of Devonshire, Hugh de Bras; and the prototype of Sir Hudibras is thought to have been a Devonshire man, possibly Sir Samuel Luke, one of Cromwell's captains, well known to Butler. The idea of the fanatical knight and his squire wandering over the country in search of evils to be suppressed, was, no doubt, suggested by the *Don Quixote* of Cervantes, but the object of the satire being so entirely different, the plan and execution of the story possess all the glory of entire originality. The first part of *Hudibras* is, by all odds, the best. It is the result of careful observation, of varied and extensive reading, and of a large stock of native wit. The second part, published a year later, is of unequal merit. These two parts, written either while the author was in the midst of those scenes of political and religious fanaticism which so excited his indignation and disgust, or while yet the memory of those events was fresh in his mind, are crowded with unmistakable references to the characters most prominent in the civil war. Oliver and Richard Cromwell, Case, Lambert, Prynne, and several others are satirized by name. Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper is represented as the politician; John Lilburne is the brother haberdasher; William Lilly is Sidrophel, the astrologer; and a Welshman named Jones is satirized as Whackum, the astrologer's assistant.

After the publication of the second part, a period of fourteen years elapsed before the appearance of the third and concluding portion of the work. During that time every thing had changed. The hypocritical zeal of the

Puritans was no longer an interesting theme; the vices and follies of the court of Charles II. furnished other and newer subjects for the satirist's pen. He turns about, and skillfully directs his arrows against the party whose cause he had formerly so honestly espoused. "This, then," says Disraeli, "is the greater glory of Butler, that his high and indignant spirit equally satirized the hypocrites of Cromwell and the libertines of Charles."

The student who would understand and appreciate this satire must have an intimate acquaintance with the history of England during and immediately succeeding the Puritan Revolution. He will also derive advantage from reading an edition of the poem illustrated with copious notes, as any hasty or superficial study of the work will fail to disclose all of that rich harvest of wit and wisdom which it contains. The plot of the story—if plot it can be said to have—is very simple. Riding out to stop all kinds of amusement among the people, Hudibras and Ralph meet a procession of rustics leading a bear to the place of bating. The knight commands them to disperse, but they refuse. Then follows a battle, in which the ragamuffins are worsted and some of them taken prisoners. Afterwards their comrades return to the charge, liberate them, and put Hudibras and his squire in the stocks. The latter are then set free by a rich widow lady with whom Sir Hudibras falls deeply in love, on account of her wealth. Then

The knight with various doubts possess'd
To win the lady, goes in quest
Of Sidrophel, the Rosicrucian,
To know the dest'nies resolution;
With whom being met, they both chop logic
About the science astrologic:
Till falling from dispute to fight,
The conj'rer's worsted by the knight.

Hudibras afterwards visits the lady and receives a beating from her servants disguised as devils; and the story

ends "in the middle" while yet his amorous suit is undecided. But the merit of the work does not lie in the story. It is rather in the keen electric flashes of wit which occur so frequently and unexpectedly, and it is in the astonishing fertility of invention displayed by the author, that the reader will be the most deeply interested. Then the easy, conversational tone of the poem, its short octo-syllabic metre, its quaint and curious rhymes—all add a peculiar interest and charm to this unique and once popular production. The following short extract will serve as a specimen of the versification and the characteristic style of the work. It is a part of the lengthy and minute description of the knight, Sir Hudibras:

He was in logic a great critic,
Profoundly skill'd in analytic:
He could distinguish and divide
A hair 'twixt south and south-west side;
On either which he would dispute,
Confute, change hands, and still confute:
He'd undertake to prove, by force
Of argument, a man's no horse;
He'd prove a buzzard is no fowl,
And that a lord may be an owl,
A calf an alderman, a goose a justice,
And rooks committee-men and trustees.
He'd run in debt by disputation,
And pay with ratiocination.
All this by syllogism, true
In mood and figure, he would do.
For rhetoric, he could not ope
His mouth, but out there flew a trope;
But when he happen'd to break off
I' th' middle of his speech, or cough,
H' had hard words ready to shew why,
And tell what rules he did it by;
Else, when with greatest art he spoke,
You'd think he talk'd like other folk:
For all a rhetorician's rules

Teach nothing but to name his tools.
 But, when he pleas'd to shew't, his speech
 In loftiness of sound was rich ;
 A Babylonish dialect,
 Which learned pedants much affect ;
 It was a party-colored dress
 Of patched and piebald languages ;
 'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin,
 Like fustian heretofore on satin.
 It had an odd promiscuous tone
 As if h' had talk'd three parts in one ;
 Which made some think, when he did gabble,
 Th' had heard three laborers of Babel,
 Or Cerberus himself pronounce
 A leash of languages at once.

In mathematics he was greater
 Than Tycho Brahe, or Erra Pater :
 For he by geometric scale,
 Could take the size of pots of ale ;
 Resolve by sines and tangents, straight,
 If bread or butter wanted weight ;
 And wisely tell what hour o' th' day
 The clock does strike, by algebra.

Hallam says of *Hudibras* : "It was incomparably more popular than *Paradise Lost* ; no poem in our language rose at once to greater reputation. For at least half a century after its publication it was generally read and perpetually quoted. . . . In the fiction of *Hudibras* there was never much to divert the reader, and there is still less left at present. The sense of Butler is masculine, his wit inexhaustible, and it is supplied from every source of reading and observation. But these sources are often so unknown to the reader that the wit loses its effect through the obscurity of its allusions, and he yields to the bane of wit, a purblind, mole-like pedantry."

M. Taine says : "Endless scholastic discussions, arguments as long as those of the Puritans, spread their wastes

and briars over half the poem. No action, no simplicity, all is would-be satire and gross caricature; there is neither art nor harmony nor good taste to be found in it; the Puritan style is converted into an absurd gibberish; and the engalled rancor, missing its aim by its mere excess, spoils the portrait it wishes to draw. . . . Such is the grotesque stuff in which the courtiers of the Restoration delighted."

Mr. Shaw says: "Butler is at once intensely concise and abundantly rich. His expressions, taken singly, have the pregnant brevity of proverbs; while the felicity of his illustrations is perpetually opening new vistas of comic and witty association. . . . It is the marvelous condensation in his style, combined with the quaintness of his rhymes, that has caused so many of Butler's couplets to become proverbial sayings in common conversation, and to be frequently employed by people who, perhaps, do not know whence these sparkling fragments of wit and wisdom are derived."

And Hazlitt: "Butler ridicules not persons, but things; not a party, but their principles, which may belong, as time and occasion serve, to one set of solemn pretenders or another. This he has done most effectually, in every possible way and from every possible source, learned or unlearned. He has exhausted the moods and figures of satire and sophistry. His rhymes are as witty as his reasons."

A political satire of very different character from the preceding is *Absalom and Achitophel*, by John Dryden. It was written in 1681, and had reference throughout to the plot for placing on the throne at the king's death his natural son, the Duke of Monmouth. The story of the rebellion of Absalom against his father David, King of Israel, furnished a convenient parallel and suggestions, of which Dryden was not slow to avail himself. *Absalom* is the Duke of Monmouth; *Achitophel*, the Earl of Shaftesbury; *David*, Charles II.; *Abdael*, the Duke of Albemarle;

Hushai, the Earl of Rochester; *Saul*, Oliver Cromwell; *Ishbosheth*, Richard Cromwell; *Corah*, Titus Oates; *Jonas*, Sir William Jones; *Zimri*, the Duke of Buckingham; *Sheva*, Sir Roger L'Estrange; *Pharaoh*, the king of France. France is called *Egypt*; Scotland, *Hebron*; England, *Israel*; and London, *Jerusalem*. The satire is interesting to us, principally for the skill and vigor with which it describes the great historical characters of that period. There is really no plot in the recital. The argument of the poem is simply this: Shaftesbury, taking advantage of the state of feeling occasioned by the pretended Popish conspiracy, counsels Monmouth to rebel. Monmouth yields to the temptation, and many influential men join in the rebellion; the poem sketches the characters of the leaders on either side; the rebellion grows; the king calls together his friends; and the poem ends with a speech, in which the monarch declares his determination to draw the sword of justice and, by the law, to teach the rebels to obey.

He said. The Almighty nodding gave consent;
And peals of thunder shook the firmament.
Henceforth a series of new time began,
The mighty years in long procession ran;
Once more the god-like David was restored,
And willing nations knew their lawful lord.

As an example of the manner in which the poet portrays the personages who are the objects of his satire, we quote his description of Shaftesbury.

Of these the false Achitophel was first;
A name to all succeeding ages cursed:
For close designs and crooked counsels fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfix'd in principles and place;
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy-body to decay,
And o'er inform'd the tenement of clay.

A daring pilot in extremity ;
 Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high
 He sought the storms ; but, for a calm unfit,
 Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.
 Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
 And thin partitions do their bounds divide ;
 Else why should he, with wealth and honor blest,
 Refuse his age the needful hours of rest ?
 Punish a body which he could not please,
 Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease ;
 And all to leave what with his toil he won,
 To that unfeathered two-legged thing, a son ?

* * * * *

In friendship false, implacable in hate ;
 Resolved to ruin or to rule the state.
 To compass this the triple bond he broke ;
 The pillars of the public safety shook,
 And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke :
 Then seized with fear, yet still affecting fame,
 Usurp'd a patriot's all-atoning name.

The following is his sketch of the Duke of Buckingham,
 or *Zimri* :

A man so various that he seem'd to be
 Not one, but all mankind's epitome ;
 Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
 Was every thing by starts, and nothing long ;
 But in the course of one revolving moon,
 Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon ;
 Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
 Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
 Blest madman, who could every hour employ
 With something new to wish or to enjoy !

And this of Titus Oates, the chief witness in the Popish
 plot of 1680 :

Sunk were his eyes, his voice was harsh and loud,
 Sure signs he neither choleric was, nor proud :
 His long chin proved his wit ; his saint-like grace

A church-vermilion, and a Moses' face.
 His memory, miraculously great,
 Could plots, exceeding man's belief, repeat:
 Which therefore cannot be accounted lies,
 For human wit could never such devise.
 Some future truths are mingled in his book;
 But where the witness fail'd, the prophet spoke:
 Some things like visionary flights appear;
 The spirit caught him up, the Lord knows where,
 And gave him his rabbinical degree,
 Unknown to foreign university.

In order fully to appreciate the merits of this poem, the student should read it in connection with the history of the period to which it relates, and endeavor to follow the author in all of his allusions to both persons and events. The conclusion of the piece, as we have already noticed, is not only abrupt, but feeble. Indeed, it was written before it was known what would be the final issue between "David" and his rebellious son. Referring to this fact, Dryden says in his preface: "I could not obtain from myself to show Absalom unfortunate. The frame of the story was cut out but for a picture to the waist; and if the draught be so far true, 'tis as much as I designed. Were I the inventor, who am only the historian, I should certainly conclude the piece with the reconciliation of Absalom and David. And who knows but this may come to pass. . . . I have not so much as an uncharitable wish against Achitophel, but am content to be accused of a good-natured error, and to hope with Origen, that the devil himself may at last be saved. God is infinitely merciful; and his vicegerent is only not so because he is not infinite."

Three years after the appearance of this satire a second part of *Absalom and Achitophel* appeared. Of this part, only about two hundred lines* were written by Dryden, the

* Line 310 to line 509.

remainder being the composition of Nahum Tate. It is by no means equal to the first part; there is even less of incident, and scarcely any occasion for portraiture of character. Tate's feeble and halting numbers are readily distinguished from Dryden's easy, flowing verses, which begin with:

Next these a troop of busy spirits press,

and end with:

To talk like Doeg, and to write like thee.

Hallam pronounces *Absalom and Achitophel* the best of all Dryden's satires, if not the best of his poems. It is the first piece of its kind in which the sharpness of its wit atones for its severity, and in which its taunts are made even the more cutting by reason of the discretion with which they are used. Johnson says it contains all the excellences of which a poem which is at once political and controversial is susceptible—"acrimony of censure, elegance of praise, artful delineation of characters, variety and vigor of sentiment, happy turns of language, and pleasing harmony of numbers, and all these raised to such a height as can scarcely be found in any other English composition."

Dryden's satire provoked many replies from the party which it attacked. One of these was *Absalom Senior*; or, *Absalom and Achitophel Transposed*, by Elkanah Settle. Another, and by far the ablest, was *Azaria and Hushai*, by Samuel Pordage, son of John Pordage, the astrologer. The plan of this latter poem is very similar to that of Dryden's. In it Monmouth is *Azaria*; Shaftesbury, *Hushai*; Charles II., *Amazia*; Cromwell, *Zabad*; Titus Oates, *Libni*; and Dryden, *Shimei*.

Sweet was the muse that did his wit inspire,
Had he not let his hackney muse to hire.
But variously his knowing muse could sing,
Could Doeg praise, and could blaspheme the king;

The bad make good, good bad, and bad make worse,
 Bless in heroicks, and in satyrs curse.
 Shimei to Zabad's praise could tune his muse,
 And princely Azaria could abuse.
 Zimri, we know, he had no cause to praise,
 Because he dub'd him with the name of Bayes.

This poem, like that to which it is opposed, ends in a speech from the throne; but in it, the king, instead of threatening rebels with the terrors of the law, announces the restoration of peace, and his willing assent to the desires of his people. Pordage, explaining in his preface the object of his satire, says: "I shall not go about either to excuse or justify the publishing of this poem, for that would be much more an harder task than the writing of it. But, however, I shall say, in the words of the author of the incomparable *Absalom and Achitophel*, that I am sure the design is honest. . . . The ancients say that everything hath two handles. I have laid hold of that opposite to the author of *Absalom*. As to truth, who has the better hold let the world judge; and it is no new thing for the same persons to be ill or well-represented by several parties."

In 1681 the Earl of Shaftesbury was tried for treason, and acquitted. The issue of the event was celebrated with great rejoicings, and a medal was struck in commemoration of it. On one side of this medal was the hero's head and name; on the reverse was a sun, partly hidden by clouds, rising over the Tower of London; also the date, and the motto *Lætatur*, "We rejoice." Urged by the king's advice and a present of a hundred gold pieces, Dryden made this medal the subject of another bitter satire against Shaftesbury and the Whigs. This second piece was entitled *The Medal: A Satire Against Seditious*. By the Author of "*Absalom and Achitophel*." It was published in 1682, and dedicated to the Whigs. "For to whom," said Dryden, "can I dedicate this poem with so much justice as to you? 'Tis the representation of your hero: 'tis the picture drawn at

length, which you admire and prize so much in little. None of your ornaments are wanting; neither the landscape of the tower, nor the rising sun, nor the Anno Domini of your new sovereign's coronation. . . . I have one only favor to desire of you at parting: that when you think of answering this poem, you would employ the same pens against it who have combated with so much success against *Absalom* and *Achitophel*, for then you assure yourselves of a clear victory without the least reply. Rail at me abundantly; and, not to break a custom, do it without wit. By this method you will gain a considerable point, which is wholly to waive the answer of my arguments." The poem opens with a description of the medal,

So like the man; so golden to the sight,
So base within, so counterfeit and light,

and it closes with a prophetic vision of the consequences which would follow in case the "true succession from our isle should fail."

Thus inborn broils the factions would engage,
Or wars of exiled heirs, or foreign rage,
Till halting vengeance overtook our age,
And our wild labors, wearied into rest,
Reclined us on a rightful monarch's breast.

Among the numerous replies which this poem provoked from the Whigs, only two are worthy of mention. The first is entitled *The Medal Reversed: a Satyre against Persecution. By the Author of "Azaria and Hushai."* In this piece, Pordage argued that if, on one side of the medal, sedition may be found in the guise of a statesman, on the reverse may be seen the tower, the badge of persecution:

Let then his satyr with Sedition fight,
And ours the whilst shall Persecution bite:
Two hags they are, who parties seem to make;
'Tis time for satyrs them to undertake.

See her true badge, a prison or the Tower;
For Persecution ever sides with Power.

The second reply was written by Dryden's rival, Shadwell, and was called *The Medal of John Bayes: a Satyr against Folly and Knavery*. It was very different from the mild and sensible production of Pordage, and was but little more than a fierce personal attack on Dryden. The closing lines are sufficiently indicative of its general character:

Pied thing! half wit! half fool! and for a knave
Few men than this a better mixture have:
But thou canst add to that, coward and slave.

Exasperated by this coarse and brutal attack, Dryden retorted by writing, this time, a purely personal satire: *MacFlecknoe, or a Satire on the True-Blue Protestant Poet, T. S.* In it he supposes Shadwell to be the successor in stupidity to an Irish priest named Flecknoe, so distinguished for his wretched scribblings that his name had become proverbial. Dryden describes his rival as the adopted son of this reverend king of dullness, who had long

In prose and verse, been own'd, without dispute,
Through all the realms of Nonsense, absolute.

* * * * *

And Shadwell swore, nor should his vow be vain,
That he till death true dullness would maintain;
And, in his father's right, and realm's defence,
Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense.

And then his father blesses him:

"Heavens bless my son! from Ireland let him reign
To far Barbadoes on the western main;
Of his dominion may no end be known,
And greater than his father's be his throne;
Beyond Love's Kingdom let him stretch his pen!"
He paused, and all the people cried Amen.

Then thus continued he: "My son, advance
 Still in new impudence, new ignorance.
 Success let others teach, learn thou from me
 Pangs without birth and fruitless industry.
 Let Virtuosos in five years be writ;
 Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit. . . .
 Let them be all by thy own model made
 Of dullness, and desire no foreign aid;
 That they to future ages may be known,
 Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own. . . .
 Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
 In keen Iambics, but mild Anagram.
 Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command
 Some peaceful province in Acrostic land.
 There thou may'st wings display, and altars raise
 And torture one poor word ten thousand ways;
 Or if thou wouldst thy different talents suit,
 Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute."

While yet the old king was speaking to his successor,
 he was, after the manner of Formal Trifle in Shadwell's
 drama *Virtuoso*, let down through a trap-door.

Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,
 Borne upwards by a subterranean wind.
 The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
 With double portion of his father's art.

There is little doubt that Dryden's *MacFlecknoe* suggested to Pope the idea of *The Dunciad*. This latter poem, which is very generally regarded as the greatest personal satire in the language, was first published in three books in 1728. In 1729 another edition appeared, with notes and a "prolegomena of Martinus Scriblerus," in the composition of which the poet was largely assisted by Swift and Arbuthnot. In 1742 the fourth book, or the *New Dunciad*, as it was then called, was added. The plan of the poem is briefly as follows: In the first book, the goddess of Dullness, seeking a successor to Elkanah Settle on the throne of stupidity,

fixes her eye on Theobald "to be the instrument of that great event which is the subject of the poem." In the second book, authors, stationers, critics, and bards,

A motley mixture, in long wigs, in bags,
In silks, in crapes, in garters, and in rags,

contend in games to honor the new king. In the third book, the king, slumbering in the lap of Dullness, is carried on the wings of fancy to the banks of Lethe, "where the souls of the dull are dipped by Baevias, before their entrance into this world." There he meets Settle's ghost, which leads him to a *Mount of Vision*, and shows him the glories of Dullness, past and present, and prophesies her future triumphs. In the fourth book the poet describes the completion or fulfillment of the prophecies mentioned at the end of the former. He shows how Dullness has silenced the Muses and has taken Science captive, and how she reigns supreme in the schools and the universities.

Theobald, the original hero of the poem and king of the Dunces, was a writer who had excited Pope's enmity by the publication of a commentary on Shakespeare, which proved to be more successful than a similar work of the poet's. He had also written some strictures on Pope's edition of the great dramatist, and had published them in a pamphlet called *Shakspeare Restored*. Hence the honor which Pope confers upon him, in making him king of the Dunces. But in 1743, just before Pope's death, a new edition of the *Dunciad* appeared, in which Theobald is deprived of his kingdom, and the crown is given to Colley Cibber, an actor, dramatic author, and, for some time, poet-laureate, who also had incurred the antipathy of the satirist.

"God save King Cibber!" mounts in every note.
Familiar White's, "God save King Colley!" cries;
"God save King Colley!" Drury-lane replies.
So when Jove's block descended from on high

(As sings thy great forefather Ogilby)
 Loud thunder to its botttom, shook the bog,
 And the hoarse nation croak'd, "God save King Log!"

The poem loses very much of its interest at the present time, from the fact that most of the men whom it attacked were obscure and but little known. Among the more noted persons satirized, however, were Richard Bentley, Daniel Defoe, John Dennis, Francis Quarles, and Sir Robert Walpole. In the latter part of the poem, personal satire is for the moment laid aside, and the poet gives a vivid sketch of the corruption and decline of learning in Europe. Taken all in all, there is, perhaps, no more powerful satire in the whole range of literature. The student should study the greater part of the poem with some degree of thoroughness. We give but one more quotation—a passage wherein the poet seems to have risen out of the cess-pool of invective into something like the true realms of poetry.

She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold
 Of Night primeval, and of Chaos old.
 Before her, Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
 And all its varying rainbows die away.
 Wit shoots in vain his momentary fires,
 The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
 Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos! is restored;
 Light dies before thy uncreating word:
 Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall;
 And universal darkness buries all.

Next to the *Dunciad* among personal satires may be mentioned Lord Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.* The occasion of this piece was the appearance of an adverse and severe criticism upon a collection of juvenile poems by Byron, entitled *Hours of Illness*. The satire was specially directed against the writers of the *Edinburgh Review*, in which periodical the criticism had appeared, but it referred

* Published in 1809.

also in some manner to nearly all the leading authors of the day. It is written in ordinary heroic measure, and for the first two hundred lines is full of caustic vigor, after which it gradually loses both its power and its interest. The following extracts will illustrate the manner in which Byron ridiculed his fellow-poets. It begins:

Still must I hear?—shall hoarse Fitzgerald bawl
His creaking couplets in a tavern-hall,
And I not sing, lest, haply, Scotch Reviews
Should dub me scribbler, and denounce my muse?
Prepare for rhyme—I'll publish, right or wrong:
Fools are my theme: let satire be my song!

Here is what he says of Southey:

Next see tremendous Thalaba come on,
Arabia's monstrous, wild, and wondrous son;
Domdaniel's dread destroyer, who o'erthrew
More mad magicians than the world e'er knew.
Immortal hero! all thy foes o'ercome,
Forever reign—the rival of Tom Thumb!
Since startled metre fled before thy face,
Well wert thou doomed the last of all thy race!
Well might triumphant Genii bear thee hence,
Illustrious conqueror of common sense!

And thus he speaks of Wordsworth:

Next comes the dull disciple of thy school,
That mild apostate from poetic rule,
The simple Wordsworth,—framer of a lay
As soft as evening in his favorite May;
Who warns his friend "to shake off toil and trouble
And quit his books, for fear of growing double;"
Who, both by precept and example, shows
That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose;
Convincing all by demonstration plain,
Poetic souls delight in prose insane,
And Christmas stories tortured into rhyme
Contain the essence of the true sublime.

Thus when he tells the tale of Betty Foy,
 The idiot mother of her "idiot boy,"
 A moon-struck silly lad who lost his way,
 And, like his bard, confounded night with day,
 So close on each pathetic part he dwells,
 And each adventure so sublimely tells,
 That all who view "the idiot in his glory"
 Conceive the bard the hero of the story.

James Russell Lowell's *Fable for Critics*, published in 1848, in its general plan and conception reminds us of Byron's satire; but it wants the sting of the latter, and excels it in the elements of true wit and humor. The title-page is unique: "Reader! walk up at once (it will soon be too late) and buy, at a perfectly ruinous rate, *A Fable for Critics*, or, better (I like, as a thing that the reader's first fancy may strike, an old-fashioned title-page, such as presents a tabular view of the volume's contents), *A Glance at a Few of our Literary Progenies* (Mrs. Malaprop's word) from the Tub of Diogenes; a Vocal and Musical Medley, that is, A Series of Jokes by a Wonderful Quiz, who accompanies himself with a rub-a-dub-dub, full of spirit and grace, on the top of the tub." The greater part of the poem consists of pleasant criticisms upon the literary contemporaries of the author. Of Bryant, he says:

"He is very nice reading in summer, but *inter*
Nos, we don't want *extra* freezing in winter;
 Take him up in the depth of July, my advice is,
 When you feel an Egyptian devotion to ices.
 But, deduct all you can, there's enough that's right good in him,
 He has a true soul for field, river, and wood in him;
 And his heart, in the midst of brick walls, or where'er it is,
 Glows, softens, and thrills with the tenderest charities—
 To you mortals that delve in this trade-ridden planet?
 No, to old Berkshire's hills, with their limestone and granite. . . .
 Mr. Quivis, or somebody quite as discerning,
 Some scholar who's hourly expecting his learning,
 Calls B. the American Wordsworth; but Wordsworth
 Is worth near as much as your whole tuneful herd's worth.

No, don't be absurd, he's an excellent Bryant ;
 But, my friends, you'll endanger the life of your client,
 By attempting to stretch him up into a giant :
 If you choose to compare him, I think there are two per-
 -sons fit for a parallel—Thomson and Cowper ;
 I don't mean exactly,—there's something of each,
 There's T's love of nature, C's penchant to preach ;
 Just mix up their minds so that C's spice of craziness
 Shall balance and neutralize T's turn for laziness,
 And it gives you a brain cool, quite frictionless, quiet,
 Whose internal police nips the buds of all riot,—
 A brain like a permanent straight-jacket put on
 The heart which strives vainly to burst off a button,—
 A brain which, without being slow or mechanic,
 Does more than a larger less drilled, more volcanic ;
 He's a Cowper condensed, with no craziness bitten,
 And the advantage that Wordsworth before him had written.

And of Poe he writes :

There comes Poe, with his raven, like Barnaby Rudge,
 Three-fifths of him genius and two-fifths sheer fudge,
 Who talks like a book of iambs and pentameters,
 In a way to make people of common sense damn metres,
 Who has written some things quite the best of their kind,
 But the heart somehow seems all squeezed out by the mind.

Leaving now the subject of personal satire, let us return to Pope and to that division of our subject which relates to manners and society. In this department of satire Pope excelled all his competitors. Besides the *Dunciad*, his satirical writings include his four *Moral Essays*, *The Imitations of Horace*, eight in number, and the *Prologue* and *Epilogue to the Satires*.

The first of the *Moral Essays* is addressed to Lord Cobham, and its subject is *Of the Knowledge and Characters of Men*. It was published in 1734. The second, published in the following year, *Of the Characters of Women*, is addressed to a lady. This is replete with satire.

Nothing so true as what you once let fall,
 "Most women have no characters at all."
 Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,
 And best distinguished by black, brown, or fair. . . .
 Papilia, wedded to her amorous spark,
 Sighs for the shades!—"How charming is a park!"
 A park is purchased, but the fair he sees
 All bathed in tears—"Oh odious, odious trees!"
 Ladies, like variegated tulips, show;
 'Tis to their changes half their charms we owe;
 Fine by defect, and delicately weak,
 Their happy spots the nice admirer take. . . .
 Woman and fool are two hard things to hit;
 For true no-meaning puzzles more than wit.

Then, turning away from the vain and witless Papilias, Narcissas, and Flavias, he thus describes the character of the celebrated Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough:

But what are these to great Atossa's mind?
 Scarce once herself, by turns all womankind!
 Who, with herself, or others, from her birth
 Finds all her life one warfare upon earth. . . .
 Full sixty years the world has been her trade,
 The wisest fool much time has ever made.
 From loveless youth to unrespected age,
 No passion gratified, except her rage. . . .
 Offend her, and she knows not to forgive;
 Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live;
 But die, and she'll adore you—Then the bust
 And temple rise—then fall again to dust. . . .
 And yet, believe me, good as well as ill,
 Woman's at best a contradiction still.
 Heaven, when it strives to polish all it can
 Its last best work, but forms a softer man.

The third essay, *Of the Use of Riches*, was written in 1734 and addressed to Allen Lord Bathurst. It is in the form of a colloquy between P. (Pope) and B. (Bathurst),

and, like the preceding essay, contains some fine passages and much witty satire.

Blest paper-credit! last and best supply!
 That lends corruption lighter wings to fly!
 Gold imp'd by thee, can compass hardest things,
 Can pocket states, can fetch or carry kings;
 A single leaf shall waft an army o'er,
 Or ship off senates to a distant shore. . . .
 * * * * *
 Riches, like insects, when conceal'd they lie,
 Wait but for wings, and in their season fly.
 * * * * *
 Who builds a church to God and not to Fame,
 Will never mark the marble with his name.

He describes, in the following manner, the last scene in the life of the Duke of Buckingham, the Zimri of Dryden's great satire:

In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half-hung,
 The floors of plaster, and the walls of dung,
 On once a flock-bed, but repair'd with straw,
 With tape-tied curtains, never meant to draw,
 The George and Garter dangling from that bed
 Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
 Great Villiers lies—alas! how chang'd from him,
 That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim. . . .
 No wit to flatter, left of all his store!
 No fool to laugh at, which he valued more.
 There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends
 And fame; this lord of useless thousands ends.

The fourth essay is also on the *Use of Riches*, and is addressed to Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington. It was published in 1731, at first under the title *Of Taste*, and afterwards *Of False Taste*. The following extract will be found interesting:

At Timon's villa let us pass a day,
 Where all cry out, "What sums are thrown away!"
 So proud, so grand; of that stupendous air,

Soft and agreable come never there.
 Greatness, with Timon, dwells in such a draught
 As brings all Brobdignag before your thought.
 To compass this, his building is a town,
 His pond an ocean, his parterre a down :
 Who but must laugh, the master when he sees,
 A puny insect, shivering at a breeze !
 Lo, what huge heaps of littleness around !
 The whole, a labor'd quarry above ground.
 Two cupids squirt before: a lake behind
 Improves the keenness of the northern wind.
 His gardens next your admiration call,
 On every side you look, behold the wall !
 No pleasing intricacies intervene,
 No artful wildness to perplex the scene ;
 Grove nods at grove, each valley has a brother,
 And half the platform just reflects the other.
 The suffering eye inverted nature sees,
 Trees cut to statues, statues thick as trees ;
 With here a fountain, never to be play'd ;
 And there a summer-house, that knows no shade ;
 Here Amphitrite sails through myrtle bowers ;
 There gladiators fight, or die in flowers ;
 Unwater'd see the drooping sea-horse mourn,
 And swallows roost in Nilus' dusty urn. . . .
 His study ! with what authors is it stored ?
 In books, not authors, curious is my lord ;
 To all their dated backs he turns you round ;
 These Aldus printed, those Du Suiël has bound.
 Lo, some are vellum, and the rest as good
 For all his lordship knows, but they are wood.
 For Locke or Milton 'tis in vain to look,
 These shelves admit not any modern book.

From the remaining satires of Pope we shall give no extracts, but recommend the student to study them in their entirety. Writing of his imitations from Horace Professor Ward says: "The common characteristics of the entire group need little demonstration. In versification

and diction generally, these satires are Pope's master-pieces."

Dryden and Pope are the greatest of our satirists in verse. The former has sometimes been called the English Juvenal, the latter the English Horace. In forming an estimate of their relative merits, the student may derive some useful hints from Hazlitt, who says: "Dryden was a better prose-writer, and a bolder and more varied versifier, than Pope. He was a more vigorous thinker, a more correct and logical declaimer, and had more of what may be called strength of mind than Pope; but he had not the same refinement and delicacy of feeling. Dryden's eloquence and spirit were possessed in a higher degree by others, and in nearly the same degree by Pope himself; but that by which Pope was distinguished was an essence which he alone possessed, and of incomparable value on that sole account. Dryden's *Epistles* are excellent, but inferior to Pope's, though they appear (particularly the admirable one to Congreve) to have been the model on which the latter formed his. His *Satires* are better than Pope's. His *Absalom and Achitophel* is superior, both in force of invective and discrimination of character, to anything of Pope's in the same way. The character of Achitophel is very fine, and breathes, if not a sincere love for virtue, a strong spirit of indignation against vice." It will be interesting in this connection, also, to read Johnson's celebrated parallel between Dryden and Pope.

Of Pope's satires, particularly his imitations from Horace, Dr. Johnson says: "They seem to have been written as relaxations of his genius. This employment became his favorite by its felicity; the plan was ready to his hand, and nothing was required but to accommodate as he could the sentiments of an old author to recent facts or familiar images; but what is easy is seldom excellent; such imitations cannot give pleasure to common readers; the man of learning may be sometimes surprised and delighted by an unexpected parallel; but the comparison

requires knowledge of the original, which will likewise often detect strained applications. Between Roman images and English manners there will be an irreconcilable dissimilitude, and the work will be generally uncouth and party-colored, neither original nor translated, neither ancient nor modern."

The student while studying the subject of classical imitations should read Swift's *Imitations of Horace*, and Dr. Johnson's *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, both of the latter being imitations of the satires of Juvenal.

Of Swift's satires, but little need be said. Most of them are written in prose; but among his poems we may mention *Cadenus and Vanessa*; the *Elegy on the Death of Marlborough*; *The South Sea Project*; *The Beasts' Confession*; and the *Rhapsody on Poetry*. The last-named bears some resemblance to Pope's *Dunciad*. The *Beasts' Confession* is a satirical fable directed at the various professions and callings of men, which, Prof. Nichol says, "though vivid and trenchant, appears occasionally to intrude on the gardens of Prior and Gay. Had he been an artist in verse, he might have written something in English more like the sixth satire of Juvenal than Churchill ever succeeded in doing. But Swift despised art; he rode roughshod, on his ambling cynic steed, through bad double rhyme and halting rhythm, to his end. War with the cold steel of prose was his business: his poems are the mere side-lights and pastimes of a man too grim to join heartily in any game."

The Prophecy is the title of a political satire by Thomas Chatterton. It displays an easy command of language and a remarkable maturity of thought. We copy a few stanzas:

When civil power shall snore at ease;
While soldiers fire—to keep the peace;
When murderers sanctuary find,
And petticoats can Justice blind;
Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

Commerce o'er Bondage will prevail,
 Free as the wind that fills her sail.
 When she complains of vile restraint,
 And Power is deaf to her complaint;
 Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
 For your redemption draweth nigh.

When at Bute's feet poor Freedom lies,
 Marked by the priest for sacrifice,
 And doomed a victim for the sins
 Of half the *outs* and all the *ins*;
 Look up, ye Britons! cease to sigh,
 For your redemption draweth nigh.

The Prophecy of Famine is a satire against the Scotch, written by Charles Churchill in 1762, which, says Lord Stanhope, "may yet be read with all the admiration which the most vigorous powers of verse and the most lively touches of wit can earn in the cause of slander and falsehood." Churchill wrote also the *Rosciad*, a poetical satire against the actors of his day, in which he attempted an imitation of the *Dunciad*. Although this latter poem received great praise at the time of its publication, it possesses but little, if any, real poetical merit. The most familiar passage is the following, referring to the well-known actor, Davies:

With him came mighty Davies. On my life,
 That Davies hath a very pretty wife:—
 Statesman all over! In plots famous grown!
 He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone!

Two satires by Robert Burns should be mentioned here. They are *Holy Willie's Prayer* and *The Holy Fair*. The first is intended to ridicule that sanctimonious profession of piety habitually made by a certain class of men who regard themselves as the special objects of divine favor. It was more especially directed, however, against one William Fisher, a leading elder in the church at that time,

but who afterwards was found guilty of embezzling the church-offerings entrusted to his care, and who died miserably while in a state of intoxication. We copy the first two stanzas:

O Thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thyself,
Sends aye to heaven, and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for ony gude or ill
They've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
For gifts and grace,
A burnin' and a shinin' light
To a' this place.

The *Holy Fair* is a satire on the indecorous practices customary at "sacramental occasions" in the west of Scotland. "In Scotland," says a prose writer of that period, "they run from kirk to kirk, and flock to see a sacrament, and make the use of it that the Papists do of their pilgrimages and processions; that is, indulge themselves in drunkenness, folly, and idleness. . . . At the time of the administration of the Lord's Supper upon the Thursday, Saturday, and Monday, we have preaching in the fields near the church. At first, you find a great number of men and women lying together upon the grass; here they are sleeping and snoring, some with their faces towards heaven, others with their faces turned downwards, or covered with their bonnets; . . . in another place, you see a pious circle sitting round an ale-barrel, many of which stand ready upon carts for the refreshment of the saints. The heat of the summer season, the fatigue of traveling, and the greatness of the crowd, naturally dispose them to drink; which inclines some of them to sleep,

works up the enthusiasm of others, and contributes not a little to produce those miraculous conversions that sometimes happen at these occasions; in a word, in this sacred assembly there is an odd mixture of religion, sleep, drinking, courtship, and a confusion of sexes, ages, and characters, . . . and such an absurd mixture of the serious and comic, that were we convened for any other purpose than that of worshipping the God and Governor of Nature, the scene would exceed all *power of face*."

Burns's description is by no means exaggerated; and it is said that his satire was attended with a good effect, for since its appearance the sacramental "occasion" gradually ceased to be regarded as a holiday, and decorum succeeded the former disgraceful disorder. Two or three stanzas of the satire will be sufficient here for illustration:

'Twad be owre lang a tale, to tell
 How mony stories past,
 An' how they crowded to the yill,
 When they were a' dismiss:
 How drink gaed round, in cogs and caups,
 Amang the forms and benches;
 And cheese and bread, frae women's laps,
 Was dealt about in lunches
 And dauds that day.

In comes a gaucie, gash guidwife,
 And sits down by the fire,
 Syne draws her kebbuck and her knife;
 The lasses they are shyer.
 The old guidmen, about the grace,
 Frae side to side they bother,
 Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
 And gies them't like a tether,
 Fu' lang that day. . . .

Now Clinkumbell, wi' rattlin' tow,
 Begins to jow and croon;
 Some swagger hame, the best they dow,
 Some wait the afternoon,

At slaps the billies halt a blink,
Till lasses strip their shoon;
Wi' faith and hope, and love and drink,
They're a' in famous tune
For crack that day.

"It is true," says John Service, "that religious people have had much fault to find with the *Holy Fair* and *Holy Willie*, and other satires of Burns's, in which religion, or rather ecclesiastical things and personages, have been held up to ridicule and scorn. . . . But this fault to most persons is rendered venial by a doubt as to whether it is not rather a capital merit than an unpardonable sin. His morality is not always perfect; sometimes it sanctions or applauds what cannot be defended. But he never ridicules religion except when the religion in question is in the nature of things ridiculous, and only not so by an accident of time or place. . . . Hypocrisy, superstition, fanaticism, owe him a heavy grudge. But in Scotland, at least, and where the *Holy Fair* is remembered and *Holy Willie* is not unknown, spiritual religion owes him little but thanks."

John Wolcott, usually known by his pseudonym of Peter Pindar, is noted for the coarse and pungent satires with which, during the reign of George III., he ridiculed the king, the lords, and the Royal Academy. There is, however, nothing in his so-called poems which would justly entitle them to any honorable place in English literature. Their very vulgarity and grossness, the oddity of their style, and the extreme violence of their invective, while making them a kind of literary curiosity, have prevented them from becoming known to the general reader, and will continue to debar them from favor.

The Fudge Family in Paris, by Thomas Moore, written in 1818, is one of the pleasantest and most popular of the later poetical satires. It purports to be a series of letters written from Paris by a Mr. Fudge, his son Bob, and his

daughter Biddy. The letters of the father are principally of a political character, referring, in terms of bitter irony, to the baseness of the royal family of Bourbons, lately restored to the throne of France. Bob, the epicure and dandy, writes of dinners and tailors and fashionable life. Biddy relates the history of a romantic love-affair, in which she was the second actor, the first part being performed by a linen-draper's shopman disguised as the King of Prussia. "Nothing can be more animated, brilliant, and humorous than the description of the motley life and the giddy whirl of amusement in Paris at that memorable moment; and the whole is seasoned with such a multitude of personal and political allusions, that the *Fudge Family* will probably ever retain its popularity as both a social and political sketch of a most interesting moment in modern European history."

McFingall is the title of an American satire written by John Trumbull. Both as to style and matter it is an imitation of *Hudibras*, although infinitely inferior to it in humor. It is the story of a New England squire of the Tory party and his controversy with a patriot American. At one time well known and, to some degree, popular, the poem is now seldom seen and almost forgotten.

Nothing to Wear, "an Episode of City Life," is a brilliant little satire by an American author, William Allen Butler, written in 1857. With the following extract from this poem, we bring our chapter on satirical poetry to a close:

Miss Flora McFlimsey, of Madison Square,
Has made three separate journeys to Paris;
And her father assures me, each time she was there,
That she and her friend, Mrs. Harris,
Spent six consecutive weeks, without stopping,
In one continuous round of shopping;
Shopping alone and shopping together,
At all hours of the day, and in all sorts of weather,
For all manner of things that a woman can put
On the crown of her head, or the sole of her foot,

Or wrap round her shoulders, or fit round her waist,
 Or that can be sewed on, or pinned on, or laced,
 Or tied on with a string, or stitched on with a bow,
 In front or behind, above or below ;
 Dresses for home, and the street, and the hall,
 Dresses for winter, spring, summer, and fall ;—
 And yet, though scarce three months have passed since the day
 All this merchandise went in twelve carts up Broadway,
 This same Miss McFlimsey, of Madison Square,
 When asked to a ball was in utter despair,
 Because she had nothing whatever to wear !
 But the fair Flora's case is by no means surprising ;
 I find there exists the greatest distress
 In our female community, solely arising
 From this unsupplied destitution of dress ;
 Whose unfortunate victims are filling the air
 With the pitiful wail of " Nothing to wear !"

* * * * *

Oh ladies, dear ladies, the next sunny day
 Please trundle your hoops just out of Broadway,
 To the alleys and lanes where misfortune and guilt
 Their children have gathered, their hovels have built ;
 Where hunger and vice, like twin beasts of prey
 Have hunted their victims to gloom and despair ;
 Raise the rich, dainty dress, and the fine-broidered skirt,
 Pick your delicate way through the dampness and dirt,
 Grope through the dark dens, climb the rickety stair
 To the garret, where wretches, the young and the old,
 Half starved and half naked, lie crouched from the cold ;
 See those skeleton limbs, those frost-bitten feet,
 All bleeding and bruised by the stones of the street,
 Then home to your wardrobes, and say, if you dare,—
 Spoiled children of fashion,—you've nothing to wear !

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For Voltaire, see *Life*, by John Morley or by James Parton. See, also, *Foreign Classics for English Readers*.

CHAPTER XI.

DESCRIPTIVE POETRY.

Definitions—Chaucer's Descriptions of Nature—Spenser's Allegorical Landscapes—Drayton's Polyolbion—Denham's Cooper's Hill—Pope's Windsor Forest—Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*—Goldsmith's Traveller and The Deserted Village—Thomson's Seasons—Shenstone's Schoolmistress—Cowper's Task—The Literary Revolution of the Eighteenth Century—Nature, as Described by the more Modern Poets—Byron—Scott—Shelley—Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude—Keats—To Autumn—Wordsworth—Resolution and Independence—William Cullen Bryant as a Descriptive Poet—John G. Whittier—Mogg Megone—Snow-Bound—Rural Poems—Gay's Rural Sports—Bloomfield's Farmer's Boy.

DESCRIPTIVE poetry has reference to the appreciation and delineation of certain phases of natural beauty. As English artists have excelled in the painting of landscapes, so, also, English poets have excelled the poets of all other countries in describing the beauties of the natural world. But although description is a prominent and an excellent feature in almost all of our poetry, there are but few purely descriptive poems, written merely as such, in the language.

Chaucer was the first of our poets who sang of nature's beauties, of the sights and sounds of the spring-time, of the songs of birds, of the gay livery of the flowers, of the pleasant murmuring of flowing streams. His landscapes are nearly all of the conventional kind, popular in that age among the French and the Italians. There is a peculiar sameness in his descriptions, and yet a wonderful and agreeable variety. He delights in picturing to our imagination the May morning: the fresh young grass springing up after a shower, a garden, a smoothly-mown lawn, the greenwood, "the smale foules" making melody, the clear,

flowing brook, the meadows covered with flowers; these are the elements which enter into nearly all of his poetical descriptions. He never speaks of nature in her wilder aspects; the towering mountain, the rushing torrent, the roaring waterfall, the thunder-storm—all these are unknown to his poetry. He does not even attempt to paint the clouds: he seldom refers to the sky. And yet, notwithstanding the narrowness of his range, there is an exquisite freshness and beauty and truth in all of his descriptions. "The delightful and simple familiarity of the poet with the meadows, brooks, and birds—and his love of them—has the effect of making every common aspect of nature new; the May morning is transfigured by his enjoyment of it; the grass of the field is seen as those in Paradise beheld it; the dew lies on our heart as we go forth with the poet in the dawning, and the wind blows past our ear like the music of an old song heard in the days of childhood. Half this power lies in the sweet simplicity of the words and the pleasant flowing of the metre." The opening lines of the prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* is a fair example of Chaucer's descriptions of nature.

Whanne that April with his shoures sote
 The droughte of March had perced to the rote,
 And bathed every veine in swiche licour,
 Of whiche vertue engendered is the flour,
 Whan Zephirus eke with his sote brethe
 Enspired hath in every holt and hethe
 The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
 Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne,
 And smale foules maken melodie,
 That slepen alle night with open eye,
 So priketh hem nature in hir corages;
 Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages.

Read the first hundred and fifty lines of the *Romaunt of the Rose*, and you will have a good idea of the French conventional landscape. It is May,

The time of love and jolitie,
That all thing ginneth waxen gay.

Everything is being clothed in green ; the earth "waxeth proud withal, for sweet dewes that on it fall ;" the meadows are covered with flowers ; the birds, after their long silence,

So glad that they shew in singing,
That in their heart is such liking,
That they mote singen and ben light.

* * * * *

Harde is his heart that loveth nought
In May, whan all this love is wrought,
Whan he may on these branches here
The smalle birdes singen clere
Their blisful swete song piteous,
And in this season delitous,
When love affirmeth alle thing.

We have elsewhere spoken of Chaucer's preference for the daisy. Almost the whole of the prologue to his *Legend of Good Women* is taken up with the praises of this flower. He says that although he is passionately devoted to his books, yet, when the month of May is come, and he hears the birds sing and knows that the flowers are beginning to spring, then "farewell book and my devotion." Among all the flowers in the meadow, he loves the daisy best. Indeed, so great is his affection for it, that when May has come, no day dawns but that he is up and walking in the "medes," to see this flower spreading itself to the sun, and, he says,

So glad am I, whan that I have presence
Of it, to done it all reverence,
As she that is of all flowers the flower,
Fulfilled of all virtue and honour,
And every ylike faire, and fresh of hewe,
And ever I love it, and ever ylike newe,
And ever shall, till that mine herte die,
All swear I not, of this I will not lie.

The only instance in which Chaucer attempts the description of wild nature is in the *House of Fame*, where he speaks of the paintings on the wall.

First on the wall was painted a forest
In which their dwelleth neither man nor beast,
With knotty, knarry barren trees old
With stubbes sharp and hideous to behold,
In which there ran a swimble in a swough.

It would be easy to multiply extracts from Chaucer's descriptions, but we forbear. To understand his powers and appreciate and enjoy his word-pictures we must study his poems entire. Hazlitt says: "Chaucer's descriptions of natural scenery possess the same sort of characteristic excellence as his descriptions of persons. There is about them a local truth and freshness which gives the very feeling of the air, the coolness or moisture of the ground. Inanimate objects are thus made to have a fellow-feeling in the interest of the story, and render back the sentiments of the speaker's mind. One of the finest parts of Chaucer is of this mixed kind. It is the beginning of the *Flower and the Leaf*, where he describes the delight of that young beauty, shrouded in her bower, and listening in the morning of the year to the singing of the nightingale; while her joy rises with the rising song, and gushes out afresh at every pause, and is borne along with the full tide of pleasure, and still increases, and repeats, and prolongs itself, and knows no ebb. The coolness of the arbor, its retirement, the early time of the day, the sudden starting up of the birds in the neighboring bushes, the eager delight with which they devour and rend the opening buds and flowers, are expressed with a truth and feeling which make the whole appear like the recollection of an actual scene."

Lowell says: "Chaucer was the first great poet who really loved outward nature as the source of conscious pleasurable emotion. . . . He took a true delight in

the new green of the leaves and the return of singing birds. He has never so much as heard of the 'burthen and the mystery of all this unintelligible world.' His flowers and trees and birds have never bothered themselves with Spinoza. He himself sings more like a bird than any other poet, because it never occurred to him, as to Goethe, that he ought to do so. He pours himself out in sincere joy and thankfulness. . . . He never shows any signs of effort, and it is a main proof of his excellence that he can be so adequately sampled by detached passages,—by single lines taken away from the connection in which they contribute to the general effect. . . . His simplicity is that of elegance, not of poverty. The quiet unconcern with which he says his best things is peculiar to him among English poets. He prattles inadvertently away, and all the while, like the princess in the story, lets fall a pearl at every word. It is such a piece of good luck to be natural! It is the good gift which the fairy god-mother brings to her prime favorites in the cradle. If not genius, it is alone what makes genius amiable in the arts. If a man have it not, he will never find it, for when it is sought it is gone."

Turning from the conventional, and yet simple and fresh, descriptions of Chaucer, we come next to the allegorical landscapes and the more labored delineations of Spenser. The land in which Spenser's scenes are laid is not only a fairy-land, it is a land of dreams, of visionary shapes and fancies, and yet not altogether unreal or impossible. He holds between our eyes and the natural landscape a magic glass, which, while it pictures faithfully enough the main settings of the piece, changes into fantastic and ideal forms the varied objects with which the scene is peopled. He cares but little for truth of scenery, of locality, or of character; beauty of delineation, perfection of mental imagery, rather than of material description, is what he seeks to attain.* As illustrations of the

* See Lowell's *Among My Books*, 2d Series.

truth of these remarks, read the following passages in the *Faerie Queene*: Book III., Canto V., stanzas 39-40; the Idle Lake, Book II., Canto VI.; the Gardens of Adonis, Book III., Canto VI.; the Land of Nymphs and Fairies, Book VI., Canto X.; also the description of the forest in Book I., Canto I.

As examples of the fantastic delineations in which Spenser seems to have been guided "by no rule but the impulse of an inexhaustible imagination," we quote the following stanzas from his description of the Bower of Bliss, Book II., Canto XII.:

Thence passing forth, they shortly doe arryve
Whereas the Bowre of Blisse was situate;
A place pickt out by choyce of best alyve,
That natures work by art can imitate;
In which whatever in this worldly state
Is sweete and pleasing unto living sense,
Or that may dayntest fantasy aggrate,
Was poured forth with plentifull dispence,
And made there to abound with lavish affluence.

* * * * *

There the most daintie paradise on ground
Itselfe doth offer to his sober eye,
In which all pleasures plenteously abownd,
And none does others happinesse envye;
The painted flowres; the trees upshooting hye;
The dales for shade; the hilles for breathing space;
The trembling groves; the christall running by;
And, that which all faire workes doth most aggrace,
The art, which all that wrought, appeared in no place.

And in the midst of all a fountain stood,
Of richest substance that on earth might bee,
So pure and shiny that the silver flood
Through every channell running one might see;
Most goodly it with curious ymageree
Was over-wrought, and shapes of naked boyes,
Of which some seem'd with lively iollitee
To fly about, playing their wanton toyes,
Whylest others did themselves embay in liquid ioyes.

Infinitt streames continually did well
 Out of this fountaine, sweet and faire to see,
 The which into an ample laver fell,
 And shortly grew to so great quantitie,
 That like a little lake it seem'd to bee;
 Whose depth exceeded not three cubits hight,
 That through the waves one might the bottom see,
 All pav'd beneath with jasper shining bright,
 That seem'd the fountaine in that sea did sayle upright.

* * * * *

Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound
 Of all that mote delight a dainty eare;
 Such as at once might not on living ground,
 Save in this Paradise, be heard elsewhere;
 Right hard it was for wight which did it hear
 To read what manner musicke that mote bee;
 For all that pleasing is to living eare
 Was there consorted in one harmonie;
 Birdes, voices, instruments, windes, waters, all agree:

The ioyous birdes, shrouded in chearefull shade,
 Their notes unto the voice attempted sweet;
 Th' angelicall soft trembling voyces made
 To th' instruments divine responsiveness meet
 The silver-sounding instruments did meet
 With the base murmure of the waters fall;
 The waters fall with difference discreet,
 Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;
 The gentle warbling wind low answered to all.

In this connection, we shall be interested in observing Spenser's happy manner of describing the dawn, the closing day, and the later hours of evening. Lowell says: "His way of measuring time was perfectly natural in an age when everybody did not carry a dial in his poke, as now. He is the last of the poets who went (without affectation) by the great clock of the firmament." The following examples, selected from among numerous similar ones, will suffice:

At last the golden Orientall gate
 Of greatest heaven gan to open fayre,
 And Phoebus, fresh as brydegroom to his mate,
 Came dancing forth, shaking his dewy hayre
 And hurld his glistring beams through gloomy ayre.*

The joyous day gan early to appeare;
 And fayre Aurora from the dewy bed
 Of aged Tithon gan herselfe to reare
 With rosy cheekes, for shame as blushing red:
 Her golden lockis, for hast, were loosely shed
 About her eares, when Una her did marke
 Clymbe to her charet, all with flowers spred,
 From heven high to chace the chearellesse darke;
 With mery note her lowd salutes the mounting larke.†

Now gan the golden Phoebus for to steepe
 His fierie face in billows of the west,
 And his faint steedes watred in ocean deepe,
 Whiles from their journall labours they did rest.‡

By this the northerne wagoner had set
 His sevenfold teme behind the stedfast starre
 That was in ocean waves yet never wet,
 But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre
 To all that in the wide deepe wandring arre.
 And chearefull chaunticlere with his note shrill
 Had warned once, that Phoebus fiery carre
 In hast was climbing up the easterne hill,
 Full envious that night so long his room did fill.§

Drayton's *Polyolbion*, published in 1612, and elsewhere mentioned as an historical poem, is largely descriptive; and, although it is remarkable for the accuracy of its delineations, it occasionally exhibits, on the part of its author, great imaginative powers and a lively appreciation of the beautiful and the picturesque. We have already quoted from Drayton's description of Warwickshire,

* Book I., Canto V., ii.

† Book I., Canto XI., li.

‡ Book I., Canto XI., xxxi.

§ Book I., Canto II., i.

and we venture here to add the following lines, selected from the introduction to his poem :

Of Albion's glorious isle, the wonders whilst I write,
The sundry varying soils, the pleasures infinite,
Where heat kills not the cold, nor cold expels the heat,
The calms too mildly small, nor winds too roughly great,
Nor night doth hinder day, nor day the night doth wrong,
The summer not too short, the winter not too long,—
What help shall I invoke to aid my Muse the while?
Thou genius of the place! this most renowned isle,
Which livedst long before the all-earth-drowning flood,
Whilst yet the earth did swarm with her gigantic brood,
Go thou before me still, thy circling shores about,
Direct my course so right, as with thy hand to show
Which way thy forests range, which way thy rivers flow,
Wise genius, by thy help that so I may descry
How thy fair mountains stand, and how thy valleys lie.

Among the more noted of our purely descriptive poems is *Cooper's Hill*, a poem written by Sir John Denham, and published in 1642. The author imagines himself standing upon an eminence not far from Windsor, and surveying the landscape spread out before him : the river Thames at his feet, the castle at a distance, and still more remote, on the very verge of the horizon, the tower of St. Paul's. His description of the Thames has been often quoted, and contains some fine thoughts :

Thames—the most loved of all the Ocean's sons
By his old sire—to his embraces runs,
Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,
Like mortal life to meet eternity.
Though with those streams he no resemblance hold,
Whose foam is amber, and their gravel gold,
His genuine and less guilty wealth to explore,
Search not his bottom, but survey his shore,
O'er which he kindly spreads his spacious wing,
And hatches plenty for the ensuing spring ;

Nor then destroys it with too fond a stay,
 Like mothers which their infants overlay,
 Nor with a sudden and impetuous wave,
 Like profuse kings, resumes the wealth he gave;
 No unexpected inundations spoil
 The mower's hopes, nor mock the plowman's toil;
 But godlike his unwearied bounty flows;
 First loves to do, then loves the good he does;
 Nor are his blessings to his banks confined,
 But free and common, as the sea or wind,
 When he, to boast or to disperse his stores,
 Full of the tributes of his grateful shores,
 Visits the world, and in his flying towers,
 Brings home to us, and makes both Indies ours;
 Finds wealth where 'tis, bestows it where it wants;
 Cities in deserts, woods in cities, plants;
 So that to us no thing, no place, is strange,
 While his fair bosom is the world's exchange.
 Oh could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
 My great example, as it is my theme!—
 Though deep yet clear, though gentle yet not dull,
 Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.

The last four lines were greatly admired by Dryden. Hallam says: "It is rare to find lines of eminent beauty in Denham, and equally so to be struck by any one as feeble or low. His language is always well-chosen and perspicuous, free from those strange turns of expression frequent in our older poets, where the reader is apt to suspect some error of the press, so irreconcilable do they seem with grammar or meaning. The expletive *do*, which the best of his predecessors use freely, seldom occurs in Denham; and he has, in other respects, brushed away the rust of languid and ineffective redundancies which have obstructed the popularity of men with more native genius than himself."

Windsor Forest is the title of a descriptive poem written by Alexander Pope in 1704, and published in 1713. It was suggested by Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, and, to some

extent, modeled after it. It, too, contains a passage referring to the Thames, but it is far inferior to that which we have just quoted. Dr. Johnson thinks this passage and that referring to the transformation of Lodona the weakest parts of the poem. He says: "Addison had, in his *Campaign*, derided the rivers that 'rise from their oozy beds' to tell stories of heroes; and it is, therefore, strange that Pope should adopt a fiction not only unnatural but lately censured. The story of Lodona is told with sweetness; but a new metamorphosis is a ready and puerile expedient; nothing is easier than to tell how a flower was once a blooming virgin, or a rock an obdurate tyrant."

For the sake of illustration, we quote a few lines from the oration supposed to have been delivered by the Thames:

Hail, sacred Peace! hail, long-expected days
 That Thames's glory to the stars shall raise!
 Though Tiber's streams immortal Rome behold,
 Though foaming Hermus swells with tides of gold,
 From heaven itself though sevenfold Nilus flows,
 And harvests on a hundred realms bestows;
 These now no more shall be the Muse's themes,
 Lost in my fame, as in the sea their streams.
 Let Volga's banks with iron squadrons shine,
 And groves of lances glitter on the Rhine,
 Let barbarous Gauges arm a servile train;
 But mine the blessings of a peaceful reign.
 No more my sons shall dye with British blood
 Red Iber's sands, or Ister's foaming flood:
 Safe on my shore each unmolested swain
 Shall tend the flocks, or reap the bearded grain;
 The shady empire shall retain no trace
 Of war or blood, but in the silvan chase;
 The trumpet sleep, while cheerful horns are blown,
 And arms employ'd on birds and beasts alone.

The two most beautiful descriptive poems in the language are the companion-pieces, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, written by John Milton, probably between 1632-38, and

published in 1645. The former describes the enjoyments of a cheerful man, and the scenes with which he is surrounded; the latter has reference to those objects and events which occupy corresponding places in the daily life of an individual inclined to contemplation. As these poems can be properly studied only in their entirety, we shall make no extracts from them, but merely quote a few criticisms from some of our ablest literary critics. Dr. Johnson says: "Of these two pieces, I believe opinion is uniform; every man that reads them reads them with pleasure. The author's design is not, what Theobald has remarked, merely to show how objects derive their colors from the mind, by representing the operation of the same things upon the gay and the melancholy temper, or upon the same man as he is differently disposed; but rather how, among the successive variety of appearances, every disposition of mind takes hold on those by which it may be gratified. . . . Through these two poems the images are properly selected and nicely distinguished; but the colors of the diction seem not sufficiently discriminated. I know not whether the characters are kept sufficiently apart. No mirth can, indeed, be found in his melancholy; but I am afraid that I always meet some melancholy in his mirth. They are two noble efforts of imagination."

Hallam says: "They satisfy the critics and they delight mankind. The choice of images is so judicious, their succession so rapid, the allusions are so various and pleasing, the leading distinction of the poems is so felicitously maintained, the versification is so animated, that we may place them at the head of that long series of descriptive poems which our language has to boast."

Macaulay says: "In none of the works of Milton is his peculiar manner more happily displayed than in the *Allegro* and the *Penseroso*. It is impossible to conceive that the mechanism of language can be brought to a more exquisite degree of perfection. These poems differ from others, as attar of roses differs from ordinary rose-water,

the closely-packed essence from the thin, diluted mixture. They are, indeed, not so much poems as collections of hints, from each of which the reader is to make out a poem for himself. Every epithet is a text for a stanza."

Rev. Stopford Brooke says: "Both poems are ushered in with a stately introduction, and change to a quicker and lighter measure, of which the scheme appears to be trochaic, though iambs are often introduced, and especially in the *Penseroso*. The greatest pains is bestowed upon the rhythm. There is nothing hazarded, nothing careless, yet the poems move, it seems, with careless grace. They are a landmark in the metrical art of poetry, and they are conscious of their art throughout. . . . Both poems are full of natural description. But it is neither the description which imposes one's own feeling on nature, nor the moralizing description of Gray, nor does it resemble that description which in Shelley and Wordsworth was built on the thought that Nature was alive and man's companion. It is the pure description of things seen, seen not necessarily through the poet's own mood, but always in direct relation to man and to the special mood of man's mind which Milton has chosen as the groundwork for each poem. The allusiveness of the poems pleases by the claim it makes on study. The extreme simplicity of the two motives makes these poems simple, and this is one reason why children as well as others understand and have pleasure in them. The picturesqueness of the scenes, the clear-cut and vivid outline of the things described, is also a source of delight to young and old; while the work of the higher imagination is felt as a shaping power in the poems, as the Orphean music which has harmonized and built them into that unity which is the highest and last demand of art."

Two other famous descriptive poems, to which the student's attention is especially directed, are *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*, by Oliver Goldsmith. The former was published in 1764, the latter in 1770. Both were

immensely popular. In the *Traveller*, the poet is supposed to be seated "where Alpine solitudes ascend," and where,

Placed on high above the storm's career,
he may

Look downward where an hundred realms appear;
Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide,
The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.

The great countries, thus spread out before him as a map, are made the subjects of description. Italy, Switzerland, and France are first described, and then the poet flies in fancy to Holland, and finally to "where Britain courts the western spring." Mingled with the passages describing these countries and their inhabitants, there is much moralizing with reference to the social condition of the people, and in this respect the poem partakes largely of the didactic character. The following passage is a good illustration of the tenor of the entire piece:

To men of other minds my fancy flies,
Embosom'd in the deep where Holland lies.
Methinks her patient sons before me stand,
Where the broad ocean leans against the land,
And, sedulous to stop the coming tide,
Lift the tall rampire's artificial pride.
Onward, methinks, and diligently slow,
The firm, connected bulwark seems to grow,
Spreads its long arms amid the wat'ry roar,
Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore:
While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile;—
The slow canal, the yellow-blossom'd vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain,—
A new creation rescued from his reign.

Thus, while around the wave-subjected soil
Impels the native to repeated toil,
Industrious habits in each bosom reign,

And industry begets a love of gain.
Hence all the good from opulence that springs,
With all those ills superfluous treasure brings,
Are here display'd. Their much-lov'd wealth imparts
Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts;
But view them closer, craft and fraud appear,
E'en liberty itself is barter'd here.
At gold's superior charms all freedom flies;
The needy sell it, and the rich man buys:
A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,
Here wretches seek dishonorable graves,
And, calmly bent, to servitude conform,
Dull as their lakes that slumber in the storm.

The *Deserted Village* contains more description and far less moralizing than the *Traveller*. It is fully equal to it also in versification and diction, and is most generally considered the better poem of the two. Lord Macaulay, however, while admitting the beauty of its details, declares that it has the unpardonable fault of being made up of incongruous parts. "The village in its happy days is a true English village. The village in its decay is an Irish village. The felicity and the misery which Goldsmith has brought close together belong to two different countries and to two different stages in the progress of society. He had assuredly never seen in his native island such a rural paradise, such a seat of plenty, contentment, and tranquillity as his 'Auburn.' He had assuredly never seen in England all the inhabitants of such a paradise turned out of their homes in one day and forced to emigrate in a body to America. The hamlet he had probably seen in Kent; the ejectment he had probably seen in Munster; but by joining the two, he has produced something which never was and never will be seen in any part of the world."

And yet, in spite of this inconsistency, there are many very fine passages in the poem—passages of accurate and artistic description, of tender pathos, and even of lofty,

almost sublime imagery. The deserted village has been identified as the village of Lissoy, in the parish of Kilkenny West, Ireland, where Goldsmith's father was, for a time, the pastor; and many of the incidents and characters described are drawn from real life. The most beautiful passage of description in the poem is that of the village, in the opening lines. Other passages of rare poetical merit are so numerous that it would be difficult to name them without including every line in the poem. Read, for example, the following:

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There as I passed with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below;
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young,
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whisp'ring wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.

There is much poetic art, too, in the description of the village preacher:

A man who was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year.

This picture is drawn in large part from the character of the poet's father, and in part, likewise, from that of his brother Henry. The portrait which follows, of the village schoolmaster, is that of Goldsmith's early teacher, one Thomas (or, as he was sometimes called, Paddy) Byrne.

A man severe he was, and stern to view,
I knew him well, and every truant knew.

We forbear the mention even of other passages, since it is only in its completeness that the poem can be properly studied and appreciated. Of Goldsmith's poetical capabilities, we have space for but a few extracts. Sir Walter Scott says: "It would be difficult to point out one among the English poets less likely to be excelled in his own style than the author of the *Deserted Village*. . . . The wreath of Goldsmith is unsullied; he wrote to exalt virtue and expose vice; and he accomplished this task in a manner which raises him to the highest rank among British authors."

Campbell says: "Goldsmith's poetry enjoys a calm and steady popularity. It inspires us, indeed, with no admiration of daring design or of fertile invention; but it presents, within its narrow limits, a distinct and unbroken view of poetical delightfulness. His descriptions and sentiments have the pure zest of nature. He is refined without false delicacy, and correct without insipidity."

Mr. Hales says: "Goldsmith's was the one poetical voice of that time. No other poems besides his, published between Gray's *Odes* and Cowper's *Table Talk*, can be said to have lived. It is no wonder the *Deserted Village* was so widely popular. The heart of the people was not dead, though somewhat chill and cold. It warmed towards a presence so genial, so graceful, so tender."

Hazlitt says: "Few names stand higher or fairer in the annals of modern literature than that of Goldsmith. One should have his own pen to describe him as he ought to be described: amiable, various, and bland, with careless, inimitable grace touching on every kind of excellence; with manners unstudied, but a gentle heart; performing miracles of skill from pure happiness of nature, and whose greatest fault was ignorance of his own worth. As a poet, he is the most flowing and elegant of our versifiers since Pope, with traits of artless nature which Pope had not, and with a peculiar felicity in his turns upon words which he constantly repeated with delightful effect, such as,

“ . . . His lot though small,
 He sees that little lot, the lot of all.’
 * * * * *
 ‘ And turned and looked, and turned to look again.’

“The finest things he has left behind him in verse are his character of a country schoolmaster, and that prophetic description of Burke in the *Retaliation*.”

The most celebrated, though, by no means, the most popular, descriptive poem in our literature, is *The Seasons*, by James Thomson. The part of this poem which appeared first was *Winter*. It was published in 1726, and was received with great favor. It was followed in 1727 by *Summer*; *Spring* was published in 1728, and *Autumn* in 1730. The entire work, as we have it, consists of these four detached parts, and gives a general and, at the same time, minute description of the phenomena of nature during the four seasons in England. The metre is blank verse, smooth and flowing, often rich and harmonious, but frequently marred by an affected pomposity or an ill-concealed effort at a sublimity of style which little accords with the nature of the subjects treated. The descriptions of birds and domestic animals and of the minor incidents and scenes suggested by the subject are well executed. *Spring* is inscribed to the Countess of Hertford, and opens with a short invocation to the first season of the year:

Come, gentle Spring, ethereal Mildness, come,
 And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
 While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower
 Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.

The author then proceeds to discourse upon the season “as it affects the various parts of Nature, ascending from the lower to the higher,” its various phenomena, the spring rains, the vegetable world, the flowers, the birds, the “rougher world of brutes,” and the “infusive force of spring on man.” The following well-known passage occurs near the close of the piece:

. . . By degrees,
 The human blossom blows ; and every day,
 Soft as it rolls along, shows some new charm,
 The father's lustre and the mother's bloom.
 Then infant reason grows apace, and calls
 For the kind hand of an assiduous care.
 Delightful task ! to rear the tender thought,
 To teach the young idea how to shoot,
 To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
 To breathe th' enlivening spirit, and to fix
 The generous purpose in the glowing breast.

There is some very pleasing imagery in the introductory lines to *Summer* :

From brightening fields of ether fair disclos'd,
 Child of the Sun, refulgent Summer comes,
 In pride of youth, and felt through Nature's depth :
 He comes attended by the sultry hours,
 And ever-fanning breezes, on his way ;
 While from his ardent look, the turning Spring
 Averts her blushful face ; and earth and skies,
 All smiling, to his hot dominion leaves.
 Hence, let me haste into the mid-wood shade,
 Where scarce a sunbeam wanders through the gloom ;
 And on the dark-green grass, beside the brink
 Of haunted stream, that by the roots of oak
 Rolls o'er the rocky channel, lie at large,
 And sing the glories of the circling year.

This poem is addressed to the author's friend, Mr. Doddington, and contains much finer description than that on *Spring*. After some reflections upon the subject in general, and upon the seasons as influenced by the movements of the heavenly bodies, the poet proceeds to describe the various phenomena and events of a summer's day in the country : hay-making, sheap-shearing, flocks and herds, a woodland retreat, a solemn grove, a waterfall, a storm, bathing, an evening walk, sunset, meteors, a comet ; the

whole ending with a discourse on philosophy. The student will be interested in comparing the Hymn to the Sun, near the opening of this poem, with Adam and Eve's Morning Hymn in *Paradise Lost*. It is seldom that we read anything finer than Thomson's description of sunset:

Low walks the sun, and broadens by degrees,
Just o'er the verge of day. The shifting clouds
Assembled gay, a richly-gorgeous train,
In all their pomp attend his setting throne.
Air, Earth, and Ocean smile immense. And now,
As if his weary chariot sought the bowers
Of Amphitritè and her tending nymphs,
(So Grecian fable sung,) he dips his orb;
Now half-immers'd; and now a golden curve
Gives one bright glance, then total disappears.

Autumn is inscribed to Mr. Onslow, and begins thus:

Crown'd with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,
While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on; the Doric reed once more,
Well pleas'd, I tune. Whate'er the wintry frost
Nitrous prepared; the various-blossom'd Spring
Put in white promise forth; and Summer suns
Concocted strong, rush boundless now to view,
Full, perfect all, and swell my glorious theme.

The poet then describes the fields ready for harvest, reaping, a harvest storm, fox-hunting, an orchard, a vineyard, the movements of the birds, the fading woods, the soft and hazy autumn day, the rejoicing of the country-folk at the gathering in of the harvest, and closes with a dissertation in praise of country life.

Oh, knew he but his happiness, of men
The happiest he! who, far from public rage,
Deep in the vale, with a *choice few* retir'd,
Drinks the pure pleasure of the rural life. . . .

Sure peace is his ; a solid life, estranged
 To disappointment, and fallacious hope ;
 Rich in content, in Nature's bounty rich,
 In herbs and fruits ; whatever greens the Spring,
 When Heaven descends in showers ; or bends the bough
 When Summer reddens, and when Autumn beams,
 Or in wintry glebe whatever lies
 Conceal'd, and fattens with the richest sap :
 These are not wanting ; nor the milky drove,
 Luxuriant, spread o'er all the lowing vale ;
 Nor bleating mountains ; nor the chide of streams,
 And hum of bees, inviting sleep sincere
 Into the guiltless breast, beneath the shade,
 Or thrown at large amid the fragrant hay ;
 Nor aught besides of prospect, grove, or song,
 Dim grottoes, gleaming lakes, and fountains clear ;
 Here, too, dwells simple truth ; plain innocence ;
 Unsullied beauty ; sound unbroken youth,
 Patient of labor, with a little pleas'd ;
 Health ever blooming ; unambitious toil ;
 Calm contemplation and poetic ease.

Winter is inscribed to the Earl of Wilmington, and opens
 in a manner very similar to that of the preceding poems.

See, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
 Sullen and sad, with all his rising train,
 Vapors, and clouds, and storms. Be these my theme !
 These ! that exalt the soul to solemn thought,
 And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred glooms !

This poem describes the approach of winter,—rain, wind,
 snow,—with a diversion upon the wants and miseries of
 human life. Then it describes how a winter evening is
 spent in the country and in the city ; the appearance of
 frost ; winter in the far north. It closes with moral reflec-
 tions upon a future state. The hymn which follows this
 poem and forms the conclusion to the entire work is often
 quoted and is well worth study .

These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the *varied* God. The rolling year
Is full of thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring
Thy beauty walks, thy tenderness and love.
Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm;
Echo the mountains round; the forest smiles;
And every sense, and every heart, is joy.
Then comes thy glory in the Summer months,
With light and heat refulgent. Then thy sun
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year:
And oft thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks,
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,
By brooks and groves in hollow-whispering gales.
Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfined,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.
In Winter awful thou! with clouds and storms
Around thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest rolled,
Majestic darkness! On the whirlwind's wing
Riding sublime, thou bidst the world adore,
And humblest nature with thy northern blast.

In order to give variety and interest to a poem entirely descriptive and without definite form or scope, the author of the *Seasons* has introduced, here and there, various little episodes and digressions. For example, in *Summer* he relates the charming story of Musidora bathing; in *Autumn*, he introduces the narrative of Lavinia, gleaning in Palemon's fields—a modernization of the Scripture story of Ruth and Boaz; in *Winter*, he tells us of the wolves descending from the Alps and the Apennines, and of the shepherd losing his way and perishing in the snow-storms.

The *Seasons* is not a poem which will attract the general reader, and even the student will be more interested in studying it by detached parts than as a whole. Hazlitt pronounced Thomson the best of our descriptive poets, because he describes not to the eye alone, but to the other senses also. He puts his heart into his subject, writes as he feels, and humanizes whatever he touches. His subjects

are treated of in a way that is easily understood and hence interesting to all.

The Schoolmistress is the title of a charming little poem written by William Shenstone in 1737, and revised and enlarged in 1742. Although not, strictly speaking, a descriptive poem, it contains many passages of exquisite description, and it is constructed with such consummate skill as to well merit the praise of being "a perfect piece of writing." The design of the author was to write a humorous poem which should be "comic yet tender, lusory yet elegant, and with such a blending of the serious and the facetious that the result of the poem might be a pleasing sort of ambiguity." And yet, as the poet seems to have feared, the *Schoolmistress* has been very generally misunderstood, and has been admired more for its quaint simplicity and its homely descriptions than for its half-concealed humor. Its subject is

A matron old whom we Schoolmistress name,
Who boasts unruly brats with birch to tame,

and it embraces a description of the dwelling, the school, the habits, and the occupation of that worthy dame. But it was no ideal schoolmistress that the poet painted; it was a real personage, one Sarah Lloyd, the teacher of a little school at Leasowes, in Shropshire, and Shenstone himself had been one of the urchins whom he describes as being in her charge. The poem is written in imitation of Spenser, in the nine-lined stanza made so famous by that author, and with many quaint affectations of style. As this work should be read and studied entire, we make no extracts. It will be interesting to compare it with Goldsmith's later performance, the description of the village schoolmaster, to which we have elsewhere alluded.

The Task, a poem written by William Cowper and published in 1684, although satirical and didactic, as well as descriptive, may very properly be studied in this connection. It was written at the suggestion of the author's

friend, Lady Austen, who asked him to write something in blank verse, and playfully gave him the sofa as a subject. "He obeyed; and, having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and, pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth, at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a volume." The poem is written in blank verse, but with an effort to preserve a natural and colloquial style of expression. Hence we shall fail to find in it that affected pomp of diction which is so serious a blemish in Thomson's *Seasons*. Cowper, as we have elsewhere remarked, was the first to abandon the mechanical versification and the conventional phrases of the artificial school of poets, and to return to nature and to the passions of the human heart for inspiration and guidance. He was not what we would call a great poet. He may even be said to have lacked creative power; but he possessed a quickness of thought and a depth of feeling and a certain manliness and sincerity which lifted him above the level of the ordinary poets and poetasters who had preceded him.

The *Task* is composed in six books, and is written in a rambling, discursive style, treating of an immense variety of subjects, social, historical, descriptive, didactic. The first book is entitled *The Sofa*.

I sing the Sofa. I, who lately sang
Truth, Hope, and Charity, and touch'd with awe
The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand,
Escap'd with pain from that advent'rous flight,
Now seek repose upon an humbler theme;
The theme though humble, yet august and proud
Th' occasion—for the Fair commands the song.

In this book the author discourses upon the various kinds of seats; then he speaks of the rambles of a truant boy on the banks of the Thames, of country sights and sounds, of solitude, of forests and groves, of the necessity

or exercise, of gypsies, of the South Sea islanders, of the advantages and disadvantages of great cities, and, finally, of the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy. The following passage may be compared with Thomson's lines in praise of country life:

God made the country and man made the town.
 What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts
 That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
 That life holds out to all, should most abound
 And least be threatened in the fields and groves?
 Possess ye therefore, ye who, borne about
 In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
 But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
 But such as art contrives, possess ye still
 Your element; there only can ye shine;
 There only minds like yours can do no harm.
 Our groves were planted to console at noon
 The pensive wand'rer in their shades. At eve,
 The moonbeam, sliding softly in between
 The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
 Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
 The splendor of your lamps; they but eclipse
 Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
 Our more harmonious notes; the thrush departs
 Scar'd, and th' offended nightingale is mute.

The second Book is called *The Timepiece*, but why, it is rather difficult to discover. It treats of war and peace; of earthquakes; of satire; of the good preacher as compared with the "theatrical clerical coxcomb;" of popular applause; of the corruption of the clergy; and of the lack of discipline in the universities. It is more satirical than descriptive.

The third Book is called *The Garden*, and is equally discursive. In it the poet eulogizes domestic happiness, "the only bliss of Paradise that has survived the fall;" he discourses piously on divine illumination and on truth; then he returns to the consideration of country life and its

advantages: the occupations of the farmer, as sowing, pruning, the culture of flowers; and the book concludes with a satire upon city life, and an address to the metropolis.

In Book IV., *The Winter Evening*, the poet confines himself more closely to the subject. He speaks of the arrival of the postman; of an evening of quiet enjoyment at the fireside; of the amusements of winter; of the farmer's daughter; of the desertion of the country by the rich; of the militia and of corporate bodies; and, lastly, he returns to his favorite subject, the advantages of country life.

Book V., *The Winter Morning Walk*, continues the train of thought suggested by the preceding book. There is some fine description in the first half of the book, but the latter half is of a didactic character. The subjects treated are, as usual, varied: A frosty morning; cattle; poultry; a waterfall in winter; the amusements of monarchs; wars; liberty; patriots and martyrs. The book ends with an address to the Creator.

Book VI., *The Winter Walk at Noon*, discourses about books and meditation; about our familiarity with the course of nature; about cruelty to animals; about hero-worship; about the happy restoration of all things, and Him who shall bring it to pass.

In this poem there are several passages well worthy of attention, either for the faithfulness of their description or for the keenness and force of their satire. We shall quote but two, the first being selected from the poet's address to Winter (Book IV.); the second, the description of a fine noon in Winter (Book VI.).

I.

O Winter, ruler of th' inverted year,
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fring'd with a beard made white with other snows

Than those of age, thy forehead wrapp'd in clouds,
 A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
 A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
 But urg'd by storms along its slipp'ry way,
 I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
 And dreaded as thou art! Thou hold'st the Sun
 A pris'ner in the yet undawning east,
 Short'ning his journey between morn and noon,
 And hurrying him, impatient of his stay
 Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
 Compensating his loss with added hours
 Of social converse and instructive ease,
 And gath'ring, at short notice, in one group,
 The family dispers'd, and fixing thought,
 Not less dispers'd by daylight and its cares.
 I crown thee king of intimate delights,
 Fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness,
 And all the comforts that the lowly roof
 Of undisturb'd Retirement, and the hours
 Of long uninterrupted evening know.

II.

The night was Winter in his roughest mood;
 The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
 Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
 And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
 The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
 And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
 Without a cloud, and white without a speck
 The dazzling splendor of the scene below.
 Again the harmony comes o'er the vale;
 And through the trees I view th' embattled tower,
 Whence all the music. I again perceive
 The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
 And settle in soft musings as I tread
 The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,
 Whose outspread branches over-arch the glade.
 The roof, though movable through all its length
 As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed
 And, intercepting in their silent fall

The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
 No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
 The red-breast warbles still, but is content
 With slender notes, and more than half suppressed.
 Pleas'd with his solitude, and flitting light
 From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
 From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
 That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.

The *Task* contains numerous short sayings or single expressions worthy of remembrance. The following are examples:

"By ceaseless action all that is subsists."

"Like a coy maiden, Ease, when courted most,
 Farthest retires."

"England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—
 My country! and, while yet a nook is left,
 Where English minds and manners may be found,
 Shall be constrained to love thee!"

"There is a pleasure in poetic pains
 Which only poets know."

"Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream."

"Great princes have great playthings. Some have played
 At hewing mountains into men, and some
 At building human wonders mountain-high."

"He is the freeman, whom the truth makes free,
 And all are slaves besides."

"He is the happy man, whose life e'en now
 Shows somewhat of that happier life to come."

Writing of Cowper's poetry, the Rev. Stopford Brooke says: "The *Task* is mainly a description of himself and his life in the country, his home, his friends, his thoughts as he walks, the quiet landscape of Olney, the life of the

poor people about him, mixed up with disquisitions on political and social subjects, and at the end a prophecy of the victory of the Kingdom of God. The change in it in relation to the subject of nature is very great. Cowper is the first of the poets who loves Nature entirely for her own sake. He paints only what he sees, but he paints it with the affection of a child for a flower, and with the minute observation of a man. The change in relation to the subject of man is equally great. The idea of mankind as a whole, which we have seen growing up, is fully formed in Cowper's mind. The range of his interests is as wide as the world, and all men form one brotherhood. All the social questions of education, prisons, hospitals, city and country life, the state of the poor and their sorrows, the question of universal freedom and of slavery, of human wrong and oppression, of just and free government, of international intercourse and union, and, above all, the entirely new question of the future destiny of the whole race, as a whole, are introduced by Cowper into English poetry. It is a wonderful change; a change so wonderful that it is like a new world. It is, in fact, the concentration into one retired poet's work of all the new thought on the subject of mankind which was soon to take so fierce a form in the French Revolution. And though splendor and passion were added by the poets who succeeded him to the new poetry, yet they worked on the thoughts he had laid down, and he is their leader."

The value of Cowper's poetry is not to be estimated by its present interest to the general reader, but by the influence which it had in shaping and changing the poetry which followed him; and, with this consideration in view, the student can scarcely afford to omit a careful and systematic study of his greatest poem, the *Task*.

Although the number of purely descriptive poems in our language is so limited, it would be easy to fill volumes with extracts from the poets relating to or describing the manifold beauties and the wonderful phenomena of nature.

Indeed, all true poets have ever gone to nature as the great source of poetic inspiration. It was only that class of writers belonging to the artificial school of Dryden and Pope who either ignored nature or sought to make it subservient to art. The earlier poets made use of natural scenery chiefly as a background to their pictures of human life. The artificial poets endeavored to substitute, instead of this background, one made strictly according to the rules of art. But with Cowper and his successors natural scenery was not only restored to its original favor in poetry, but, what is more, it came to occupy a front place—a place superior to and sometimes distinct from the subject of man and pictures of human life. Even before the time of Cowper, we may find poems in which we can discover a gradual movement towards this exaltation of nature to its proper place—a love of it for its own sake.

This movement, as we have already learned, was begun by Thomson in the *Seasons*, which, notwithstanding its coldness and artificiality of style, may be said to be the first poem in which the world of nature is observed distinct from the world of man. John Dyer's *Grongar Hill* (1726), although suggested by Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, and, to some extent, an imitation of it, contains the promise of better things, and his *Fleece*, written in 1757, has in it some beautiful descriptions of natural scenery. In Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, and in his *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, elsewhere discussed, there are fine landscapes, but they occupy a position secondary to man and to mortality. The same may be said in regard to Collins's odes.

In *The Minstrel*, a didactic poem written by James Beattie in 1771, there is much reference to nature and its influence upon the young poet accustomed to its companionship; but the descriptions are marred by the infusion of a sickly sentiment, not at all in consonance with the realities of natural scenery.

When we reach the great natural school of poets that

succeeded Cowper, we find nature and natural description occupying so prominent a place in poetry that our limits will not permit us to make many extracts. We must go to the complete works themselves of these poets, if we wish to study the manner in which they have treated the greatest subject of all poetry. Burns describes Nature as she appears to the lover's eye, and that peculiar gentleness of feeling which so distinctly characterizes him may be seen in the exquisite tenderness with which he speaks of the sheep, the cattle, and the wild creatures of the woods and the fields. For example, read his beautiful lines *On Turning up a Mouse's Nest with the Plough*, and on destroying in the same way a *Mountain Daisy*. Scott excels in the accurate painting of romantic landscapes, rich in color and charming in their very wildness. Many examples of his power in this direction may be found in his great romantic poems, elsewhere noticed. Coleridge has written but few pictures of natural scenery, but these for depth of passion and wideness of range are unsurpassed. Byron's descriptions partake more of the character of those of the artificial poets; and in them nature is often, but not always, represented as subservient to man. As examples, read his short descriptions in *Childe Harold*. "Byron," says Macaulay, "belonged half to the old and half to the new school of poetry. His personal taste led him to the former; his thirst of praise to the latter; his talents were equally suited to both." The descriptions of Shelley are of a transcendental character, dreamy, visionary, and wild, but none the less glorious and beautiful. For example, read *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude*. Nowhere can there be found so grand and yet so fair a picture of river and of woodland, or a more exquisite description than that of the voyage of Alastor to his retreat in the forest. To the ideal conceptions of Shelley, nature was alive, and filled with the active principle of love; and everything in nature—"even the invisible sphere of vapor sucked up by the sun from the forest pool"—was actuated by an indwelling, loving

spirit. As Turner's inimitable pictures are to landscape painting, so are Shelley's descriptions to English poetry. Both are, in a degree, visionary and unreal, but full of suggestions to the imaginative mind, lifting us above the sober commonplaces of earth into the actual realms of Fancy. We cannot forbear quoting the following piece of delicious imagination from *Alastor* :

Roused by the shock, he started from his trance—
 The cold white light of morning, the blue moon
 Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,
 The distinct valley and the vacant woods,
 Spread round him where he stood. Whither have fled
 The hues of heaven that canopied his bower
 Of yesternight? the sounds that soothed his sleep,
 The mystery and the majesty of earth,
 The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes
 Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly
 As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.
 The Spirit of sweet Human Love has sent
 A vision to the sleep of him who spurned
 Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues
 Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;
 He overleaps the bounds. Alas! alas!
 Were limbs and breath and being intertwined
 Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, forever lost
 In the wide pathless desert of dim Sleep,
 That beautiful shape! Does the dark gate of Death
 Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,
 O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds,
 And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake,
 Lead only to a black and watery depth,
 While Death's blue vault with loathliest vapors hung,
 Where every shade which the foul grave exhales
 Hides its dead eye from the detested day,
 Conducts, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?

In the descriptions of Keats we find very much to admire: a union of the natural with the spiritual, of the

ideal with the real; an intense love of the beautiful for beauty's sake; and a vivid enjoyment of all that is lovely in nature. For examples, read the descriptive passages in his longer poems, *Hyperion* and *Endymion*, and the following ode *To Autumn*:

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel-shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or, by a cider-press with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them; thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter from the skies.

But of all the poets, none have looked upon the natural world with more clearness, subdued feeling, and spirituality than Wordsworth. He is pre-eminently the descriptive poet of our literature. Principal Shairp, writing of Wordsworth's poetry, says: "The cardinal work of the imagination is to possess itself of the life of whatever thing it deals with. In the extent to which he did this, and the truthfulness with which he did it, lies Wordsworth's supreme power. This power manifests itself in Wordsworth in two directions—as it is turned on nature and as it is turned on man. In dealing with nature, Wordsworth's imagination has no limit—it is as wide as the world; as much at home when gazing on the little celandine as when moving with the vast elemental forces of heaven and earth. In human life and character his range is narrower, whether these limitations came from within or were self-imposed." Another critic says: "With all his power and greatness, Wordsworth rarely strikes those deepest notes that move human nature most profoundly. He is a poet of feeling, never of passion. Reflection and contemplation are his natural atmosphere. With a deep, sweet, sober, almost pleasurable sense of his own emotion, he looks at events which sting a more susceptible nature with sharp pangs of anguish. . . . He did not create. In this, as well as in many other ways, he proves himself to belong to the Miltonic, not the Shakspearian family. But below the level of Shakspeare,—the one unapproachable eminence in poetry,—we know no English writer by whose side we should hesitate to place the austere and lofty poet of the mountains. In spite of this one great defect, or rather by means of it, he proves his greatness doubly; for, without a living soul to help him into that high place; without human progeny to prove that in him, too, dwelt the divine life-giving principle of genius; without even the gloomy grandeur of a Lucifer to open the gates of fame for him, Wordsworth has stepped upon a pedestal scarce lower than that of Milton, and so long as the

English language lasts is little likely to lose his crown of fullest fame."*

For examples of Wordsworth's descriptive powers, the student is referred to the numerous passages of description in the *Excursion*, and to many of his shorter poems, as his *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, *Lines Written in Early Spring*, and his *Lyrical Ballads*. The following little extract, as perfect as anything in poetry, is selected from the poem entitled *Resolution and Independence*:

All things that love the sun are out of doors ;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth ;
The grass is bright with rain-drops ; on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth—
And, with her feet, she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, which, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way wherever she doth run.

I was a traveler then upon the moor,
I saw the hare that raced about with joy ;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar,
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy ;
The pleasant season did my heart employ ;
My old remembrances went from me wholly,
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

But as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight,
In our dejection do we sink as low ;
To me that morning did it happen so,
And fears and fancies thick upon me came,
Dim sadness and blind thoughts I knew not, nor could name. . . .

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy,
The sleepless soul that perished in his pride ;
Of him who walked in glory and in joy
Behind his plough along the mountain side.
By our own spirits are we deified :
We poets in our youth begin in gladness,
But thereof comes in the end despondency and madness.

* *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1871.

Among American poets who have found their chief inspiration in nature and natural scenery, William Cullen Bryant ranks highest. An English writer, in commenting upon his works, says: "He is emphatically a man of the woods, or, as he himself would express it, 'one of the sages and hermits of the solemn wood.' His true orison is the *Forest Hymn*. He ever manifests what we may term a druidical spirit of poetry. He loves the woodlands, for there he may worship God in secret and with uninterrupted favor and consolation. 'The groves were God's first temples,' he sings, believing that they are worthy still to be so. Yet if he were less austere, if he shook off the melancholy which is really oppressive, he would become at once greater than he is. Even in a poem on *June* he cannot forget the darksome ways of life. There he chants of

"A cell within the frozen mould,
A coffin borne through sleet,
And icy clouds above it rolled,
While fierce the tempest beat.'"

And an American critic remarks: "Bryant's best poems have an anthem-like cadence, which accords with the vast scenes they celebrate. He approaches the mighty forests, whose shady haunts only the footstep of the Indian has penetrated, deeply conscious of its virgin grandeur. His harp is strung in harmony with the wild moan of the ancient boughs. Every moss-covered trunk breathes to him of the mysteries of time, and each wild-flower, which lifts its pale buds above the brown and withered leaves, whispers some thought of gentleness. We feel, when musing with him in the solitary woods, as if blessed with a companion peculiarly fitted to interpret their teachings; and, while intent, in our retirement, upon the page, we are sensible, as it were, of the presence of those sylvan monarchs that crown the hill-tops and grace the valleys of our native land."

As examples of Bryant's power as a descriptive poet, the

student is advised to read his *Forest Hymn*, his *Ode to the Summer Wind*, and the well-known poem on *The Death of the Flowers*. One of the finest of his shorter poems is his *Lines to a Waterfowl*. We copy it entire:

Whither midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly limned upon the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seeks't thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean-side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
 Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
 In the long way that I must tread alone,
 Will lead my steps aright.

A better illustration of the criticisms we have copied may be found in the following stanzas from the hymn to *The Evening Wind* :

Spirit that breathest through my lattice, thou
 That cool'st the twilight of the sultry day,
 Gratefully flows thy freshness round my brow :
 Thou hast been out upon the deep at play,
 Riding all day the wild blue waves till now,
 Roughening their crests, and scattering high their spray
 And swelling the white sail. I welcome thee
 To the scorched land, thou wanderer of the sea !

* * * * *

Go, rock the little wood-bird in his nest,
 Curl the still waters, bright with stars, and rouse
 The wide old wood from his majestic rest,
 Summoning from the innumerable boughs
 The strange, deep harmonies that haunt his breast.
 Pleasant shall be thy way where meekly bows
 The shutting flower, and darkling waters pass,
 And where the o'ershadowing branches sweep the grass.

John G. Whittier's poems abound in descriptive passages, imaginative, but, at the same time, true to nature. His story of *Mogg Megone* and his charming idyl, *Snow-Bound*, may, with propriety, be classed among descriptive poems. The former was intended by the poet to serve only as a framework for sketches of the scenery of New England, and of the early inhabitants. It is not without merit, however, as a story, and we shall derive much pleasure by studying it in connection with Longfellow's *Evangeline* and *Miles Standish*. The following passage is a fair example of the manner in which natural scenery is described in this poem :

'Tis morning over Norridgewock,—
 On tree and wigwam, wave and rock.
 Bathed in the autumnal sunshine, stirred
 At intervals by breeze and bird,
 And wearing all the hues which glow
 In heaven's own pure and perfect bow,
 That glorious picture of the air,
 Which summer's light-robed angel forms
 On the dark ground of fading storms,
 With pencil dipped in sunbeams there,—
 And stretching out on either hand,
 O'er all that wide and unshorn land,
 Till, weary of its gorgeousness,
 The aching and the dazzled eye
 Rests, gladdened, on the calm blue sky,—
 Slumbers the mighty wilderness!
 The oak, upon the windy hill,
 Its dark green burthen upward heaves—
 The hemlock broods above its rill,
 Its cone-like foliage darker still,
 Against the birch's graceful stem,
 And the rough walnut-bough receives
 The sun upon its crowded leaves,
 Each colored like a topaz gem;
 And the tall maple wears with them
 The coronal which autumn gives,
 The brief, bright sign of ruin near,
 The hectic of a dying year!

Snow-Bound should be read entire. Its simple, life-like portraiture of country scenes and manners is nowhere excelled. Neither Thomson nor Cowper, in his happiest efforts, ever wrote anything so true to nature, so real and yet so poetical. A single quotation will suffice:

Our uncle, innocent of books,
 Was rich in lore of field and brooks,
 The ancient teachers never dumb
 Of Nature's unhoused lyceum.

In moons and tides and weather wise,
He read the clouds as prophecies,
And foul or fair could well divine
By many an occult hint and sign,
Holding the cunning-worded keys
To all the woodcraft mysteries ;
Himself to Nature's heart so near
That all her voices in his ear
Of beast or bird had meanings clear,
Like Apollonius of old,
Who knew the tales the sparrows told,
Or Hermes who interpreted
What the sage cranes of Nilus said ;
A simple, guileless, childlike man,
Content to live where life began ;
Strong only on his native grounds,
The little world of sights and sounds
Whose girdle was the parish bounds,
Whereof his fondly partial pride
The common features magnified,
As Surrey hills to mountains grew
In White of Selborne's loving view,—
He told how teal and loon he shot,
And how the eagle's eggs he got,
The feats on pond and river done,
The prodigies of rod and gun ;
Till, warming with the tales he told,
Forgotten was the outside cold,
The bitter wind unheeded blew ;
From ripening corn the pigeons flew,
The partridge drumm'd i' the wood, the mink
Went fishing down the river brink.
In fields with bean or clover gay,
The woodchuck, like a hermit gray,
Peered from the doorway of his cell ;
The muskrat plied the mason's trade,
And tier by tier his mud-walls laid ;
And from the shag-bark over head
The grizzled squirrel dropped his shell.

Closely allied to poems of a purely descriptive character is a large class of poetical compositions relating to country life in general, to the occupations of the agricultural classes, and to rural sports and pastimes, and dealing but little in pictures of natural scenery. These, although sometimes classed with pastoral poetry, differ from it in that they are founded upon reality, and are correct representations of life and manners among the lowly, and not mere effusions of a far-fetched sentimentality. Of these, we shall mention only two: *Rural Sports*, by John Gay, and *The Farmer's Boy*, by Robert Bloomfield.

Rural Sports was published in 1711, more than fifteen years before the appearance of the *Seasons*, and, therefore, cannot be an imitation of that poem. How much Thomson was indebted to Gay it is impossible to determine, but there are certainly some striking points of resemblance between the two works. *Rural Sports* is a poem in two cantos, written in rhyming ten-syllabled couplets. It contains no grand nor striking passages, but the language is choice and the versification pleasing. The following extract will serve as an illustration :

Or when the plowman leaves the task of day,
And trudging homeward, whistles on the way ;
When the big-udder'd cows with patience stand,
Waiting the strokings of the damsel's hand ;
No warbling cheers the woods ; the feather'd choir,
To court kind slumbers, to the sprays retire ;
When no rude gale disturbs the sleeping trees,
Nor aspen leaves confess the gentlest breeze ;
Engaged in thought, to Neptune's bounds I stray,
To take my farewell of the parting day :
Far in the deep the Sun his glory hides,
A streak of gold the sea and sky divides ;
The purple clouds their amber linings show,
And edg'd with flame, rolls every wave below ;
Here pensive I behold the fading light,
And o'er the distant billow lose my sight.

The Farmer's Boy, "a Rural Poem," by Robert Bloomfield, was published in 1800, and is a work of decided merit. It is a description of the author's own experience while in the employment of a farmer, and is written in a pleasing, easy style, never rising into passion and seldom sinking into dullness. Immediately upon its publication the poem became immensely popular. Thirty thousand copies were sold, and it was translated into French, Italian, and Latin. Like Thomson's *Seasons*, it is composed of four parts, entitled, respectively, *Spring*, *Summer*, *Autumn*, *Winter*. It has, however, a better defined plan, partakes more largely of the narrative style, and is written not in blank verse but in rhymed couplets:

The clattering dairy maid, immersed in steam,
Singing and scrubbing midst her milk and cream,
Bawls out—"Go fetch the cows!"—he hears no more,
For pigs, and ducks, and turkeys throng the door,
And sitting hens, for constant war prepared;
A concert strange to that which late he heard.
Straight to the meadow then he whistling goes;
With well-known halloo calls his lazy cows;
Down the rich pasture heedlessly they graze,
Or hear the summons with an idle gaze;
For well they know the cowyard yields no more
Its tempting fragrance nor its wintry store;
Reluctance marks their steps sedate and slow;
The right of conquest, all the law they know. . . .
At home, the yard affords a grateful scene;
For Spring makes e'en a miry cowyard clean. . . .
Forth comes the maid, and like the morning smiles;
The mistress too, and follow'd close by Giles.
A friendly tripod forms their humble seat,
With pails bright-scoured, and delicately sweet.
Where shadowing elms obstruct the morning ray,
Begins the work, begins the simple lay;
The full charged udder yields its willing streams,
While Mary sings some lover's amorous dreams;
And crouching Giles beneath a neighboring tree,
Tugs o'er his pail and chants with equal glee.

REFERENCES.

GOLDSMITH: See Washington Irving's *Life of Goldsmith*; *Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith*, by John Forster (London, 1848); Macaulay's *Essays*; Thackeray's *English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century*; Campbell's *Specimens of the British Poets* (London, 1841); *Goldsmith* (English Men of Letters), by William Black; Hazlitt's *English Poets*; DeQuincey's *Eighteenth Century*.

COWPER: *Life of Cowper*, by Benham, in the Globe edition of his works; *Life of Cowper*, by Charles Cowden Clarke; *Cowper* (English Men of Letters), by Goldwin Smith; Macaulay's *Essay on Moore's Life of Byron*; Hazlitt's *English Poets*.

Other writers mentioned in this chapter have references named elsewhere.

CHAPTER XII.

PASTORAL POETRY.

Definitions—Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*—Drayton's *Shepherd's Garland* and the *Muses' Elysium*—Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*—Jonson's *Sad Shepherd*—Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*—Milton's *Arcades*—Pope's *Pastorals*—Philips's *Pastorals*—Gay's *Shepherd's Week*—Allan Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd*—Shenstone's *Pastoral Ballads*.

PASTORAL poetry may be defined as descriptive poetry, with the additional qualities of narrative and dramatic action. In its broadest sense, it is poetry relating to country life and manners. In its original and narrowest sense, it is that which relates to the tranquil life and the rural employments of shepherds. Says Alexander Pope: "A pastoral is an imitation of the action of a shepherd, or one considered under that character. The form of this imitation is dramatic or narrative, or mixed of both; the fable simple, the manners not too polite nor too rustic; the thoughts are plain, yet admit a little quickness and passion, but that short and flowing; the expression humble, yet as pure as the language will afford; neat but not florid; easy and yet lively. In short, the fable, manners, thoughts, and expressions are full of the greatest simplicity in nature. The complete character of a pastoral consists in simplicity, brevity, and delicacy; the two first of which render an eclogue natural, and the last delightful."

Our English pastorals were intended originally as imitations of the style and manner of the Greek "idyls" of Theocritus or the Latin "eclogues" of Virgil. But they fall far short of their models, principally from the reason that the conditions of rural life in England, or as known to Englishmen, have always been so widely different from

those portrayed in the classical pastorals, that neither the writer nor the reader can wholly reconcile them. The first and one of the most noted pastorals in our language is the *Shepherd's Calendar*, "containing Twelve Eclogues, proportionable to the Twelve Months," by Edmund Spenser. It was published in 1579, and dedicated to that "noble and virtuous gentleman, most worthie of all titles both of learning and chivalry, Maister Philip Sidney." In this series of eclogues, Spenser endeavors, under the guise of pastoral fiction, to paint English scenery and English character, thus giving a tone of nationality to his poem. Hence his characters, far from discoursing in the manner of simple shepherds, are represented as discussing questions of grave importance to society and the State, and as paying delicate compliments to some of the illustrious personages of that time. In the first eclogue, or *Januarie*, Colin Clout, a shepherd boy, is represented as bewailing his unfortunate love for a country lass named Rosalind. The name Colin Clout was derived from Skelton, or possibly from the French poet Marot (both of whom had used it before), and is often applied by Spenser to himself. At the conclusion of his lament, the shepherd boy breaks his oaten pipe and casts himself upon the ground.

By that the welked Phoebus gan availe
 His wearie waine; and now the frosty Night
 Her mantle black through heaven gan overhaile;
 Which scene, the pensive Boy, half in despite,
 Arose and homeward drove his sunned sheepe,
 Whose hanging heads did seeme his carefull case to weepe.

Februarie, the second eclogue, is a colloquy between two shepherds, Cuddie and Thenot, and is rather "morall and generall than bent to anie secret or particular purpose." In it the well-known fable of the Briar and the Oak is very pleasantly related.

March is of a more allegorical character, and represents two shepherd boys, Wyllie and Thomalin, discoursing about matters of love and about Cupid and his arrows.

April, the fourth eclogue, was intended purposely "to the honour and prayse of our most gracious soveraigne, Queene Elizabeth,

"That blessed wight,
The flowre of virgins; may she florish long
In princely plight!"

In the fifth eclogue, or *May*, Spenser enters into the vexed controversies of the time by representing his shepherds, Piers and Palinode, as types, respectively, of Protestant and Catholic pastors: the former having at heart the welfare and happiness of his flock; the latter caring only for selfish pleasures. The fable of the Fox and the Kid is inserted for the sake of illustration.

In *June* the complaint of Colin Clout in reference to his unfortunate love for the "fayre Rosalind" is continued. In *July* Spenser returns to the subject of the rival churches, speaking in honor and commendation of "good shepherds, and to the shame and dispraise of proud and ambitious pastors." Of the Romish clergy, the false shepherds, he gives the following description:

Theire sheep han crusts, and they the bread;
The chippes, and they the cheere;
They han the fleece and eke the flesh,
(O seely sheepe the while!)

The corne is theyrs, let other thresh,
Their handes they may not file.
They han great store and thriftie stockes,
Great friends and feeble foes;
What neede hem caren for their flockes,
Theyr boyes can looke to those.

The next eclogue, the eighth, is of a more lively and pleasing character, representing a controversy between two shepherds, after the manner of Theocritus, and also in imitation of the third and seventh eclogues of Virgil. In the next, *September*, we are given another allegory, wherein

are set forth the abuses and corruption of the Catholic Church. One Diggon Davie, a shepherd, is represented as driving his sheep into a foreign country in hopes of deriving greater profit from his flock; there, however, they are torn in pieces by ravenous wolves

That with sheeps clothing doen hem disguise,

and the shepherd returns to his home, "a wretched wight in piteous plight."

The tenth eclogue is a poetical defense of poetry, written in imitation of the sixteenth Idyl of Theocritus. The eleventh eclogue, between Thenot and Colin, bewails the death of a noble maiden called in the poem Dido. It is merely a free translation of Clement Marot's lament of Colin and Thenot for Queen Louise of France, the mother of Francis I. The twelfth eclogue, or *December*, is also derived from Marot, being a paraphrase of that poet's eclogue on the course of his life, "wherein he compareth his youth to the spring-time, when hee was fresh and free from love's follie; his manhood to the sommer, which, he saith, was consumed with greate and excessive drouth, caused through a comet or blazing starre, by which he meaneth love; his ripest yeares he resembleth to an unseasonable harvest, wherein the fruits fall ere they be ripe":

My boughs with bloosmes that crowned were at first,
And promised of timely fruit such store,
Are left both bare and barrein now at erst;
The flattering fruite is fallen to ground before,
And rotted ere they were halfe mellow ripe;
My harvest, wast, my hope away did wipe.

His latter years, to continue the simile, he compares to chill winter:

So now my yeere drawes to his latter terme,
My spring is spent, my sommer burnt up quite;
My harvest hastes to stirre up Winter sterne,

And bids him clayme with rigorous rage his right :
So now he stormes with many a sturdy stoure ;
So now his blustering blast eche coast doth scoure.

Hallam, in writing of the *Shepherd's Calendar*, says :
"Spenser has been censured for intermingling, in his pastorals, allusions to the political history and religious differences of his own times ; and an ingenious critic has asserted that the description of the grand and beautiful objects of nature, with well-selected scenes of rural life, real, but not coarse, constitute the only proper materials of pastoral poetry. These limitations, however, seem little conformable to the practice of poets or the taste of mankind ; and if Spenser has erred in the allegorical part of his pastorals, he has done so in company with most of those who have tuned the shepherd's pipe. . . . In fact, mere pastoral must soon become insipid, unless it borrows something from active life or elevated philosophy. The most interesting parts of the *Shepherd's Calendar* are of this description ; for Spenser has not displayed the powers of his own imagination so strongly as we might expect in pictures of natural scenery. This poem has spirit and beauty in many passages ; but it is not much read in the present day, nor does it seem to be approved by modern critics."

Michael Drayton, who said of Spenser, "He had done enough for the immortality of his name had he only given us his *Shepherd's Calendar*, a masterpiece, if any," published, in 1593, an imitation of Spenser's work, which he called *The Shepherd's Garland*, "fashioned in nine eclogues." He wrote also *The Muses' Elysium*, consisting of a series of nine idyls or *Nymphals*, as he preferred to call them, which abound in graceful, delicate, and quaint expressions, and which in language and conception are unsurpassed even by Spenser.

Britannia's Pastorals, by William Browne, although there is no reason to believe that the story which threads the parts

together had any foundation in fact, is sometimes classed with the historical poems of Daniel and Drayton. The poem consists of three books, the first having been published in 1613, the second in 1616, and the third, from long-neglected manuscripts, in 1852. Each book contains five cantos or songs, and the entire mechanical structure of the work has been modeled strictly after that of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Browne was a native of Devonshire, and the finest passages in his work relate to the local scenery and the natural beauties of that county. His poetry is chiefly interesting from the influence which it had upon succeeding writers.

His *Shepherd's Pipe*, a pastoral poem in seven eclogues, was published in 1614, and it is from the fourth of these eclogues, wherein the poet laments the death of his friend Thomas Manwood, that Milton is said to have derived his idea of *Lycidas*. Warton has also pointed out a strong resemblance between a little song of Browne's and a certain passage in Milton's *Comus*. We copy the song entire; the passage in *Comus* has already been quoted. (See page 243.)

The Charm.

Son of Erebus and night
Hie away; and aim thy flight
Where consort none other fowl
Than the bat and sullen owl;
Where upon thy limber grass
Poppy and mandragoras
With like simples not a few
Hang for ever drops of dew.
Where flows Lethe without coil
Softly like a stream of oil.
Hie thee hither gentle sleep:
With this Greek no longer keep.
Thrice I charge thee by my wand,
Thrice with moly from my hand
Do I touch Ulysses eyes,
And with the jaspis: then arise
Sagest Greek.

"While it is right to think of Milton as a friendly reader of our poet," says an English critic, "it would be a mistake to ascribe to Browne any great share in his poetic development. What is certain is, that both poets felt and showed, in their different ways, the combined and contending influences of classical and Puritan feeling. Browne is at once a Pagan and a Protestant."

Some other poets of note are also said to have drawn inspiration and aid from Browne's manner of writing. "And in our days," says Southey, "his peculiarities have been caught, and his beauties imitated, by men who will themselves find admirers and imitators hereafter." Hallam says: "Browne is truly a poet, full of imagination, grace, and sweetness, though not very nervous or rapid. . . . He is an early model of ease and variety in the regular couplet. Many passages in his unequal poem are hardly excelled by the fables of Dryden." Campbell says: "His poetry is not without beauty; but it is the beauty of mere landscape and allegory, without the manners and passions that constitute human interest." And this last is probably the most correct estimate of his work.

At this point we may merely recall to mind the two pastoral dramas, elsewhere described, the *Sad Shepherd*, by Ben Jonson,—“the best testimony to the poetical imagination of its author,”—and the *Faithful Shepherdess*, by John Fletcher,—“rivaling in beauty of language and imagery some of Shakspeare's best efforts.” The student should also read again the two pastoral lyrics, *Come, Live with me and be my Love*, and the *Nymph's Reply*, in the chapter on Lyrical Poetry.

Milton's *Arcades* is the title applied to the poetical part of a masque performed before the Countess Dowager of Derby, at Harefield, near Horton. The entire masque was much longer, consisting, besides the three songs which compose the *Arcades*, of some quite lengthy prose parts, and full stage directions. It was performed by members of Lady Derby's family, probably in 1633, certainly not

later than 1636. Stopford Brooke says: "The poem itself is slight, the introduction not very worthy. The eighty lines of rhymed verse seem to be hampered in thought and movement by the needs of rhyme. One is driven to feel how much better Milton would have made them in the vehicle of blank verse. But they contain one splendid passage on his favorite subject of the spherul music that the nine Sirens sing:

"And the low world in measured motion draw
After the heavenly tune."

"The songs which close it are pretty, but below Milton's power. The whole piece, in fact, bears the stamp of the occasional."

The following is the closing *Song*:

Nymphs and shepherds dance no more
By sandy Ladon's liliated banks;
On old Lycæus, or Cyllene hoar,
Trip no more in twilight ranks;
Though Erymanth your loss deplore,
A better soil shall give ye thanks.
From the stony Mænalus
Bring your flocks, and live with us;
Here ye shall have greater grace,
To serve the lady of this place.
Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were,
Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.
Such a rural queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

Milton's *Comus*, already noticed in the chapter on Dramatic Poetry, might also be called a pastoral.

Pope's *Pastorals*, published in 1709, but written in 1704, when the author was but sixteen years of age, possess considerable merit. The student will be highly interested, as well as benefited, by a careful perusal of the prose discourse with which these poems are introduced. The first

pastoral, *Spring*, or *Damon*, is dedicated to Sir William Trumbull, and, like the eighth eclogue of the *Shepherd's Calendar*, represents a poetical contest between two swains, here called Daphnis and Strephon. *Summer*, or *Alexis*, is dedicated to Dr. Garth, and relates the mournful complaints of a love-sick youth, who has received, as a legacy from Colin Clout, a flute, the same

That taught the groves my Rosalinda's name.

Compare the following lines with a passage in Milton's *Lycidas*:

And yet my numbers please the rural throng,
Rough satyrs dance, and Pan applauds the song;
The nymphs, forsaking every cave and spring,
Their early fruit and milk-white turtles bring! *

The third pastoral, *Autumn*, or *Hylas and Egon*, is dedicated to Mr. Wycherley, and represents two shepherds—the one sighing for an absent love, the other mourning for a faithless one. This contains many beautiful and highly poetic passages, and is decidedly the finest of the series.

The fourth pastoral, *Winter*, or *Daphne*, is inscribed to the memory of Mrs. Tempest, who died on the night of the great storm in 1708. It is in the form of a colloquy between Lycidas and Thyrsis, and laments the death of fair Daphne, "Daphne, our grief! our glory now no more!" A parallel to the following passage may be found in Spenser's *Astrophel*, as well as in Milton's *Lycidas*:

But see! where Daphne, wondering mounts on high
Above the clouds, above the starry sky!
Eternal beauties grace the shining scene,
Fields ever fresh, and groves forever green!
There, while you rest in amaranthine bowers,
Or from those meads select unfading flowers,
Behold us kindly, who your name implore,
Daphne, our goddess, and our grief no more!

* See page 371 of this volume.

Nearly a year before the appearance of Pope's *Pastorals* in print, one Ambrose Philips had published a series of six pastorals modeled after the *Shepherd's Calendar*. It was owing to a too friendly notice of this work that a bitter quarrel arose between the rival authors. Thomas Tickell had written for the *Guardian* (Nos. 22, 23, 28, 30, 32), in April, 1713, a series of papers on pastoral poetry, in which he took occasion to eulogize the performance of Philips, closing with the assertion that "Theocritus left his dominion to Virgil, Virgil left his to his son Spenser, and Spenser was succeeded by his eldest son Philips." Pope, writhing under this implied condemnation of his own work, resorted to an ingenious method of revenge. Knowing that Addison, the editor of the *Guardian*, would not publish any direct attack upon Philips, he prepared for that paper an article, professing to be the sixth of the series on pastoral poetry, "in which," says Dr. Johnson, "with an unexampled and unequaled artifice of irony, though he has himself always the advantage, he gives the preference to Philips. The design of aggrandizing himself he disguised with such dexterity that, though Addison discovered it, Steele was deceived, and was afraid of displeasing Pope by publishing his paper. Published, however, it was (in No. 40 of the *Guardian*), and from that time Pope and Philips lived in a perpetual reciprocation of malevolence."

The Shepherd's Week is the title of a series of six pastorals written by John Gay in 1714. The design of this work was to ridicule particularly the affected simplicity of Philips, and, perhaps, also of all other writers of pastorals in their false portraiture of English country life. The six eclogues are entitled, respectively, *Monday, or the Squabble*; *Tuesday, or the Ditty*; *Wednesday, or the Dumps*; *Thursday, or the Spell*; *Friday, or the Dirge*; *Saturday, or the Flights*. "Thou wilt not," says Gay in his preface, "find my shepherdesses idly piping on their reeds, but milking the kine, tying up the sheaves, or, if the hogs are astray, driving

them into their sties. My shepherd gathereth none other nosegays but what are the growth of our fields; he sleepeth not under myrtle shades, but under an hedge; nor doth he vigilantly defend his flock from wolves, because there are none."

The public were not long in discovering that, notwithstanding its humorous character, there was much more real poetry in this bit of burlesque than there was in the labored production of Philips, which had suggested it, and it at once met with favor far beyond the most sanguine expectations of its author.

We give a short extract for the sake of illustration :

Ah, Colin! canst thou leave thy Sweetheart true!
What I have done for thee will Cic'ly do?
Will she thy linen wash or hosen darn,
And knit thee gloves made of her own-spun yarn?
Will she with housewife's hand provide thy meat,
And every Sunday morn thy neckcloth plait?
Which o'er thy kersey doublet spreading wide,
In service-time drew Cic'ly's eyes aside.
If in the soil you guide the crooked share,
Your early breakfast is my constant care;
And when with even hand you strow the grain,
I fight the thievish rooks from off the plain.
In misling days when I my thresher heard,
With nappy beer I to the barn repaired;
Lost in the music of the whirling flail,
To gaze on thee I left the smoking pail:
In harvest when the sun was mounted high,
My leathern bottle did thy drought supply;
Whene'er you mowed I followed with the rake,
And have full oft been sun-burnt for thy sake;
When in the welkin gathering showers were seen,
I lagged the last with Colin on the green;
And when at eve returning with thy car,
Awaiting heard the jingling bells from far;
Straight on the fire the sooty pot I placed,
To warm thy broth I burnt my hands for haste.

When hungry thou stoodst staring, like an oaf,
I sliced the luncheon from the barley loaf:
With crumbled bread I thickened well thy mess.
Ah, love me more, or love thy pottage less!

The *Gentle Shepherd* is the title of a pastoral drama written by Allan Ramsay in 1725. It is written in the Scotch dialect, and contains some rich humor. Numerous songs are interspersed here and there throughout the poem, and as a burlesque it is almost equal to Gay's *Shepherd's Week*. The following passage between Patie and Peggy will illustrate:

Patie.

By the delicious warmness of thy mouth
And rowing eye, which smiling tells the truth,
I guess, my lassie, that, as well as I,
You're made for love, and why should you deny?

Peggy.

But ken ye, lad, gin we confess o'er soon,
Ye think us cheap, and syne the wooing's done:
The maiden that o'er quickly times her power,
Like unripe fruit will taste but hard and sour.

Patie.

But when they hing o'er lang upon the tree,
Their sweetness they may tine, and sae may ye;
Red-cheeked you completely ripe appear,
And I have tholed and wooed a lang half year.

Peggy.

Then dinna pu' me; gently thus I fa'
Into my Patie's arms for good and a'.
But stint your wishes to this kind embrace,
And mint nae farther till we've got the grace.

Patie.

O charming armfu'! Hence, ye cares away.
I'll kiss my treasure a' the livelang day:
A' night I'll dream my kisses o'er again,
Till that day come that ye'll be a' my ain.

Chorus.

Sun, gallop down the westling skies,
 Gang soon to bed, and quickly rise;
 O lash your steeds, post time away,
 And haste about our bridal day;
 And if ye're wearied, honest light,
 Sleep, gin ye like, a week that night.

William Shenstone's *Pastoral Ballad in Four Parts*, published in 1743, is a serious attempt at the writing of conventional pastoral poetry. But, aside from the melody of the verse, it is rather a ridiculous performance. It is a love-poem celebrating the passion of one Corydon for a certain Phyllis. The four parts are entitled, respectively, *Absence*, *Hope*, *Solicitude*, *Despair*. Of the fickle Phyllis, the lover speaks in *Absence*:

When forced the fair nymph to forego,
 What anguish I felt at my heart!
 Yet I thought—but it might not be so—
 'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.
 She gazed as I slowly withdrew;
 My path I could hardly discern;
 So sweetly she bade me adieu,
 I thought that she bade me return.

And in the strain of *Hope* he says:

One would think she might like to retire
 To the bower I have labored to rear,
 Not a shrub that I heard her admire,
 But I hasted and planted it there.
 Oh how sudden the jessamine strove
 With the lilac to render it gay!
 Already it calls for my love,
 To prune the wild branches away.

And in *Solicitude*:

Why will you my passion reprove?
 Why term it a folly to grieve?

Ere I show you the charms of my love,
 She's fairer than you can believe.
 With her mien she enamors the brave,
 With her wit she engages the free;
 With her modesty pleases the grave;
 She is every way pleasing to me.

But in *Disappointment* :

O ye woods, spread your branches apace;
 To your deepest recesses I fly;
 I would hide with the beasts of the chase;
 I would vanish from every eye.
 Yet my reed shall resound through the grove,
 With the same sad complaint it begun;
 How she smiled—and I could not but love;
 Was faithless—and I am undone!

Endymion, a poem by John Keats, written in 1818, may be classed among pastorals, although in its general character it differs widely from all other poems of the kind. Lord Jeffrey says that the models upon which *Endymion* is formed "are obviously the *Faithful Shepherdess* of Fletcher and the *Sad Shepherd* of Ben Jonson, the exquisite metres and inspired diction of which Keats has copied with great boldness and fidelity; and, like his great originals, has also contrived to impart to the whole piece that true rural and poetical air which breathes only in them and in Theocritus." It is not what we would call a great poem, but it contains many passages of rare poetical merit; and Shelley pronounced it "full of some of the highest and the finest gleams of poetry." As the student will scarcely be expected to read the entire poem, we make a few extracts :

A thing of beauty is a joy forever;
 Its loveliness increases; it will never
 Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
 A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
 Spite of the despondence, of th' inhuman dearth
 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
 Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darken'd ways
 Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
 Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
 For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
 With the green world they live in; and clear rills
 That for themselves a cooling covert make
 'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,
 Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:
 And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
 We have imagined for the mighty dead;
 All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
 An endless fountain of immortal drink,
 Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

(Book I., 1-22.)

O magic sleep! O comfortable bird,
 That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind
 Till it is hush'd and smooth! O unconfin'd
 Restraint! imprison'd liberty! great key
 To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,
 Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,
 Echoing grottoes, full of tumbling waves
 And moonlight; ay, to all the mazy world
 Of silvery enchantment!—who upfurl'd
 Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,
 But renovates and lives?

(Book I., 453-463.)

O love! how potent hast thou been to teach
 Strange journeyings! wherever beauty dwells,
 In gulf or aerie, mountains or deep dells,
 In light, in gloom, in star or blazing sun,
 Thou pointest out the way, and straight 'tis won.
 Amid his toil thou gavest Leander breath;

Thou leddest Orpheus through the gleams of death,
 Thou madest Pluto bear thin element;
 And now, O winged Chieftain! thou hast sent
 A moon-beam to the deep, deep water-world,
 To find Endymion. (Book III., 92-102.)

[*Song in Book IV.*]

O Sorrow!

Why dost borrow

The natural hue of health from vermeil lips?—

To give maiden blushes

To the white rose bushes?

Or is it thy dewy hand the daisy tips?

O Sorrow!

Why dost borrow

The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye?—

To give the glow-worm light?

Or, on a moonless night,

To tinge, on syren shores, the salt sea-spray?

O Sorrow!

Why dost borrow

The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue?—

To give at evening pale

Unto the nightingale,

That thou mayst listen the cold dews among?

O Sorrow!

Why dost borrow

Heart's lightness from the merriment of May?—

A lover would not tread

A cowslip on the head,

Though he should dance from eve till peep of day—

Nor any drooping flower

Held sacred for thy bower,

Wherever he may sport himself and play.

To Sorrow

I bade good morrow,

And thought to leave her far away behind;

But cheerly, cheerly,
She loves me dearly;
She is so constant to me, and so kind:
I would deceive her,
And so leave her,
But ah! she is so constant and so kind.

In his preface to *Endymion*, Keats says: "The two first books, and, indeed, the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good: it will not; the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away; a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting and fitting myself for verses fit to live." Unfortunately, the opinion of the critics concurred with that which the author has here expressed in regard to the incompleteness of the poem; and the severe censure which it received from the *Quarterly Review* is said to have caused the illness which resulted in the poet's death.

CHAPTER XIII.

DIDACTIC POETRY.

Definition—Gower's *Confessio Amantis*—*Nosce Teipsum*, by Sir John Davies—John Dryden's *Religio Laici*—*The Hind and the Panther*—Alexander Pope's *Essay on Criticism*—*Essay on Man*—Edward Young—*Night Thoughts*—Dr. Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*—London—Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination*—Warton's *Pleasures of Melancholy*—Rogers's *Pleasures of Memory*—Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope*—*The Sabbath*, by Grahame—Wordsworth's *Excursion*—Pollok's *Course of Time*.

THE express object of didactic poetry is to teach. Strictly speaking, this kind of composition is not true poetry, since the supreme design of poetry is to administer to our emotive nature, and not to our reasoning powers. De Quincey says: "No poetry can have the function of teaching. It is impossible that a variety of species should contradict the very purpose which contradistinguishes its *genus*. Poetry, or any one of the fine arts (all of which alike speak through the genial nature of man and his excited sensibilities), can teach only as nature teaches, as forests teach, as the sea teaches, as infancy teaches; namely, by deep impulse, by hieroglyphic suggestion. Their teaching is not direct or explicit, but lurking, implicit, masked in deep incarnations. To teach formally and professedly, is to abandon the very differential character and principle of poetry. If poetry could condescend to teach anything, it would be truths, moral or religious. But even these it can utter only through symbols and actions. The great moral, for instance, the last result of the *Paradise Lost*, is once formally announced; but it teaches itself only by diffusing its lesson through the entire poem in the total succession of events and purposes; and even this succession teaches it only when the whole is gathered

into unity by a reflex action of meditation; just as the pulsation of the physical heart can exist only when all the parts in an animal system are locked into one organization."

Connected with the subject of didactic poetry there are, in fact, many contradictions; but these it is not our purpose here to discuss. It is sufficient for us to assume that there is a species of composition known as didactic poetry; but whether it be poetry, or whether it be merely prose and reason, or whether it occupy a middle place distinct from either prose or poetry, we shall leave for the student's own good judgment to determine.

Very much of our best poetry has been written with a didactic intent, but its teaching has been, as De Quincey remarks above, "by deep impulse and hieroglyphic suggestion." Such was the poetry of Caedmon, and, in fact, all the religious poems of the Anglo-Saxons; such were all the allegorical poems of our language; such were Milton's *Lycidas*, *Comus*, and *Paradise Lost*; such were Cowper's *Task*, and a host of the noblest performances of our greatest poets.

The *Confessio Amantis*, written by John Gower in the fourteenth century, and printed by Caxton in 1483, was probably intended to serve, in a certain degree, the purposes of a didactic poem; for the author's notion of true poetry was that it should be

Wisdom to the wise,
And play to them that list to play.

The *Confessio Amantis* consists of a prologue and eight books. It is a kind of a didactic allegory, embracing seven sets of stories relating to the seven deadly sins. A lover seeks Cupid and Venus, and complains that he is dying of love. Venus, taking pity upon him, calls in her confessor, the Genius of Nature, to shrive him. To him the lover kneels, and begs of him to teach him the several

points of shrift, in order that he may know his duty. The confessor begins by asking the lover various questions concerning the use of his five senses, and then the didactic stories which compose the chief part of the poem are related, sometimes in close succession, sometimes separated by little dialogues between the lover and the genius. In the course of the poem, the confessor dilates at length upon the deadly vices: pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony, and lust; and it is to illustrate the causes and consequences of these vices that the stories are related. Some of the later writers have drawn materials and suggestions from these stories; as, for instance, Shakspeare in the play of *Pericles*.

In his original prologue, Gower says that the poem was written at the earnest suggestion of Richard II., who met him while rowing on the Thames:

And bad me come into his barge,
And whan I was with him at large,
Amonges other things said,
He hath this charge upon me laid
And bad me do my besinesse,
That to his highē worthynesse
Some newē thing I shulde boke,
That he himself it mightē loke
After the forme of my writing.

The book was, at first, as a matter of course, dedicated to Richard

To whom belongeth my legeaunce
With all min hertes obeisaunce,
In al that ever a legē man
Unto his king may don or can.

But after the downfall of that monarch the dedication was transferred to Henry of Lancaster, and the words above quoted were changed to, "What shall befall here afterward, God wot!"

This work was the last of a series of three didactic poems by Gower. The first was in French verse, and was called *Speculum Meditantis*. It was an exceedingly dull poem, relating to the virtues and the prevalent vices of the period. No copy of this production is now known to be in existence. The second work was written in Latin, and was called *Vox Clamantis*. It consisted of seven books, and, although suggested by the rebellion of Wat Tyler, was intended as a vehicle of censure upon almost every class of society. The first Book is an allegorical description of Wat Tyler's rebellion; the second Book explains the object of the poem, and contains much general moralizing; the third Book still further relates the author's intentions and his reasons for writing. "I do not affect to touch the stars, or write the wonders of the poles; but rather with the common human voice that is lamenting in this land, I write the ills I see." Then he divides society into three classes, represented by the clerk, the soldier, and the plowman. The fourth Book is a review of the vices of the clergy; the fifth, those of the soldier and the serf; the sixth, of the lawyer; and the seventh is a general summing up, in which he applies Nebuchadnezzar's dream to the state of society at that time existing in England. And, in conclusion, he says: "Here is the voice of the people; but often where the people cries, is God."

Chaucer, who was a contemporary of Gower, wrote:

O moral Gower, this book I direct
 To thee and to the philosophical Strode:
 To vouchsaf there need is to correct
 Of your benignities and zeal's good,
 And to the soothfast Christ that starfe on rood,
 With all mine herte of mercy ever I pray.

Hallam says: "Gower had some effect in rendering the language less rude, and exciting a taste for verse; if he never rises, he never sinks low; he is always sensible, pol-

ished, perspicuous, and not prosaic, in the worst sense of the word."

One of the earliest purely didactic poems in the language is a work written by Sir John Davies in 1599. It is entitled *Nosce Teipsum*: "this Oracle expounded in two Elegies: 1, Of Human Knowledge; 2, Of the Soul of Man and the Immortalitie thereof." Hallam says of this poem, that, notwithstanding its metaphysical and didactic character, there are passages in it "which far outweigh much of the descriptive and imaginative poetry of the last two centuries, whether we estimate them by the pleasure they impart to us, or by the intellectual vigor they display. Experience has shown that although the faculties peculiarly deemed poetical are frequently exhibited in a considerable degree, but very few have been able to preserve a perspicuous brevity, without stiffness or pedantry (allowance made for the subject and the times), in metaphysical reasoning, so successfully as Sir John Davies."

The poem is written in the four-lined stanza afterwards made popular by Davenant in his *Gondibert*, and by Dryden in *Annus Mirabilis*. The following stanzas will sufficiently illustrate:

Then as a bee which among weeds doth fall,
Which seem sweet flowers, with lustre fresh and gay,
She lights on that, and this, and tasteth all,
But pleased with none, doth rise, and soar away;

So when the soul finds here no true content,
And, like Noah's dove, can no sure footing take;
She doth return from whence she first was sent,
And flies to Him that first her wings did make.

The first didactic poem of special note in our literature is the *Religio Laici* of John Dryden, published in 1682. The name was suggested by a Latin work, *De Religione Laici*, written by Lord Herbert of Cherbury in 1645. The object of Dryden's poem was the defense of the English

Church and the expression of his own religious convictions. The verses are addressed to "an ingenious young gentleman, my friend," upon his translation of a Roman Catholic work on the New Testament, "and the style of them is what it ought to be—epistolary."

In his preface to this work Dryden attacks both Catholics and Calvinists: the former because of their adherence to the doctrine that the pope may release the subjects of a heretic king from allegiance to their sovereign; the latter, because of their perversion of the Scriptures—for "if we consider only them, better had it been for the English nation that the Bible had still remained in the original Greek and Hebrew, or, at least, in the honest Latin of St. Jerome." The poem opens with a comparison between Reason and Religion:

Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
Is Reason to the soul.
And as those nightly tapers disappear,
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere;
So, pale grows Reason at Religion's sight;
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light.

To discover the nature and attributes of the Deity has ever been the highest aspiration of man. But Reason alone has never led him to a knowledge of God.

Revealed Religion first informed his sight,
And Reason saw not, till Faith sprung the light.

Passing, then, to the discussion of the scheme of redemption as understood from the Bible, Dryden takes the occasion to express his belief that "heathens who never did, nor without miracle could, hear of the name of Christ, were yet in a possibility of salvation":

If from his nature foes may pity claim,
Much more may strangers who ne'er heard his name. . . .

And those who followed Reason's dictates right,
 Lived up, and lifted high their natural light;
 With Socrates may see their Maker's face,
 While thousand rubric-martyrs want a place.

He argues that the Scriptures have been corrupted, "all copies disagreeing;" that no church can rightly claim omniscience; and that it is not necessary that all men should read and believe alike:

If others in the same glass better see,
 'Tis for themselves they look, but not for me:
 For *my* salvation must its doom receive,
 Not from what *others* but what *I* believe.

In the time of the Catholic supremacy the Bible was monopolized by the clergy, and "mother Church did mightily prevail":

Poor laymen took salvation on content;
 As needy men take money good or bad:
 God's word they had not, but the priest's they had.

Now, when the book is found "in every vulgar hand," the rabble of Non-conformists and Deists, having great zeal and little judgment, pass by the plain truths which present themselves, and pervert the doctrines of Scripture by mis-interpretation.

So all we make of Heaven's discovered will,
 Is, not to have it, or to use it ill.
 The danger's much the same; on several shelves
 If others wreck us, or we wreck ourselves.

The only safe plan is to steer midway between these tides of ignorance and pride.

Nor proudly seek beyond our power to know;
 Faith is not built on disquisitions vain.
 In doubtful questions 'tis the safest way
 To learn what unsuspected ancients say:

For 'tis not likely we should higher soar
 In search of Heaven, than all the Church before.
 Nor can we be deceived unless we see
 The Scripture and the Fathers disagree. . . .
 And after hearing what our Church can say,
 If still our reason runs another way,
 That private reason 'tis more just to curb,
 Than by disputes the public peace disturb.
 For points obscure are of small use to learn:
 But common quiet is mankind's concern.

He who carefully reads this poem may discover in it some apparent discrepancies; for instance, after denying the omniscience of the church and the necessity of one general standard of religious belief, the author finally reaches the conclusion that we should blindly submit ourselves to that which "unsuspected ancients say;" that is, to the decisions of the Fathers of the church—meaning none other than the Roman Catholic Church. The fact is, that Dryden was even now paving his way for that change of religion which, a few years afterwards, he openly avowed, and which was the occasion of his second and greatest didactic poem, *The Hind and the Panther*.

The *Hind and the Panther* was published in 1687, after Dryden had formally connected himself with the Catholic Church. It is written in the form of an allegory, and yet it is almost entirely lacking in the essential qualities of imagery and action. The hind is the Church of Rome, the panther is the Church of England, and the poem is merely the recital of a theological controversy between these animals. The lion who protects the hind is King James II.; the Independents are represented by a bloody bear; the Quakers, by a quaking hare; the Baptists, by a bristled boar; the Freethinkers, by a buffoon ape; and the Arians, by false Reynard. In the preface to this poem Dryden explains his reasons for writing it, and declares himself emphatically in favor of freedom of conscience, and gratified at the king's declaration of indul-

gence. The poem itself is divided into three parts: "The first part, consisting most in general characters and narration, I have endeavored to raise, and give it the majestic turn of heroic poesy; the second, being matter of dispute, and chiefly concerning church authority, I was obliged to make as plain and perspicuous as I possibly could, yet not wholly neglecting the numbers, though I had not frequent occasions for the magnificence of verse; the third, which has more of the nature of domestic conversation, is, or ought to be, more free and familiar than the two former."

The principal character in the poem is thus described:

A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged,
Fed on the lawns, and in the forest ranged;
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She feared no danger, for she knew no sin;
Yet had she oft been chased with horns and hounds,
And Scythian shafts; and many winged wounds
Aimed at her heart; was often forced to fly,
And doomed to death, though fated not to die.*

The panther is thus introduced:

The Panther, sure the noblest next the Hind,
And fairest creature of the spotted kind;
Oh, could her inborn stains be washed away,
She were too good to be a beast of prey!
How can I praise or blame, and not offend,
Or how divide the frailty from the friend?
Her faults and virtues lie so mixed, that she
Nor wholly stands condemn'd, nor wholly free.
Then, like her injured Lion, let me speak;
He cannot bend her, and he would not break.

* Montague and Prior ridiculed this poem in a piece entitled *The Hind and Panther parodied in the Story of the Country Mouse and the City Mouse*. It began thus:

A milk-white mouse immortal and unchanged,
Fed on soft cheese, and o'er the dairy ranged;
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She feared no danger for she knew no gin.

The hind is afraid to drink at the common watering-place, but as she stands timidly aside, the lion, with an awful roar, bids her cease her fears. As she drinks a sober draught from the pool, the other animals look on in wonder, seeking to find in her the ten-horned monster they had so often heard about. But upon a closer view, failing to discover anything evil or frightful in her mien, they begin to admire her, and the panther, desiring to make her acquaintance, suggests

That since the sky is clear, an hour of talk
May help her to beguile the tedious walk.

As the two animals walk side by side towards the lonely cell of the hind, they converse learnedly upon the mooted doctrines of faith, and when they reach the end of their ramble, the hind, urged by her innate good manners, feels herself

. . . bound to invite
The stranger dame to be her guest that night.

The panther, more than ever pleased with her company, consents to remain, and the conversation is continued through the evening hours. The language of the hind is not always as refined as one would expect to find falling from the lips of so gentle and pure a creature; but if this were the only absurdity in the poem, it might be forgiven. Dryden endeavors to enliven the tedious dispute by the introduction of two fables: one, of the swallows and martins, told by the panther; the other, of the pigeons and a buzzard, told by the hind. At the conclusion of the latter fable the poem abruptly terminates.

Dr. Johnson says of this poem: "The original incongruity runs through the whole; the king is now Cæsar and now the lion; and the name of Pan is given to the Supreme Being. But when this constitutional absurdity is forgiven the poem must be confessed to be written with

smoothness of metre, a wide extent of knowledge, and an abundant multiplicity of images; the controversy is embellished with pointed sentences, diversified by illustrations, and enlivened by sallies of invective. . . . The original impropriety, and the subsequent unpopularity, of the subject, added to the ridiculousness of its first elements, has sunk it into neglect; but it may be usefully studied as an example of poetical ratiocination, in which the argument suffers little from the metre."

An Essay on Criticism is the title of a didactic poem written by Alexander Pope in 1709, and published in 1711. It is written in heroic couplets, and is divided into three parts: the first treating of the foundations of true criticism, the second, of the causes hindering or opposed to it; the third, of the causes favoring it.

De Quincey says: "It is a collection of independent maxims, tied together into a fasciculus by the printer, but having no natural order or logical dependency; generally so vague as to mean nothing. Like the general rules of justice in ethics, to which every man assents; but when the question comes about any practical case, ~~is~~ it just? the opinions fly asunder far as the poles. And, what is remarkable, many of the rules are violated by no man so often as by Pope, and by Pope nowhere so often as in this poem. As a single instance, he proscribes monosyllabic lines; and in no English poem of any pretensions are there so many lines of that class as in this. We have counted above a score, and the last line of all is monosyllabic." Perhaps in no other similar production, however, are there so many examples of brilliant thoughts condensed into single lines or into couplets. The thoughts themselves were probably not original with Pope, but the manner in which they are expressed is his. The following are examples:

"'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own."

"One science only will one genius fit,
So vast is art, so narrow human wit."

"A little learning is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring."

"Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found."

"For fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

"True wit is nature to advantage dressed,
What oft was thought before but ne'er so well expressed."

"Avoid extremes; and shun the fault of such
Who still are pleased too little or too much."

This poem was doubtless suggested by Boileau's *L'Art Poétique*, which was founded on Horace's *Ars Poetica*, and it, in turn, was derived from Aristotle's rules, which were very commonly known among the classical poets. And yet there is much originality and skill of invention in Pope's work. For instance, observe the following passages, in which he illustrates a precept by applying the precept itself. Speaking of the monotonous smoothness of verse with which some readers are delighted, he says:

These equal syllables alone require,
Though oft the ear the open vowels tire;
While expletives their feeble aid do join;
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line.

Again he says:

'Tis not enough no harshness gives offense,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense.
Soft is the strain when zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar.

When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
 The line too labors, and the words move slow ;
 Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
 Flies o'er th' unbending corn and skims along the main.

We know of but a single passage in this poem wherein Pope has given vent to his natural proneñess for stinging, personal satire. John Dennis, a poetaster of that time, was noted among his acquaintances for his peculiar, staring countenance and his ludicrous preference for the word *tremendous*, and he had lately written a play called *Appius and Virginia*. Pope, in the third part of his essay, makes the following thrust at him :

Fear not the anger of the wise to raise ;
 Those best can bear reproof, who merit praise.
 'Twere well might critics still this freedom take, ;
 But Appius reddens at each word you speak,
 And stares, tremendous with a threatening eye,
 Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry.
 Fear most to tax an honorable fool,
 Whose right it is, uncensured to be dull ;
 Such, without wit, are poets when they please,
 As without learning they can take degrees.

The effect of these lines upon the object of them, John Dennis, proved the truth of the assertions which they contained. Dennis retaliated by writing a pamphlet entitled *Reflections, Critical and Satyrical, upon a late Rhapsody called an "Essay on Criticism."* But Pope suffered no inconvenience from his harmless attack.

Between the years 1732 and 1735 appeared Pope's *Essay on Man*, by some regarded as his greatest work. The poem is contained in four epistles addressed to Lord Bolingbroke, to whom, indeed, it is said he owed much valuable assistance in the preparation of the work. The first epistle speaks of man in his relation to the universe; the second, of man in his relation to himself; the third, of

man in his relation to society; the fourth, of man's ideas concerning happiness and the pursuit of it. The following is Lowell's opinion of this poem: "It has been praised and admired by men of the most opposite beliefs, and men of no belief at all. Bishops and free-thinkers have met here on a common ground of sympathetic approval. And, indeed, there is no particular faith in it. It is a droll medley of inconsistent opinions. It proves only two things beyond question: that Pope was not a great thinker, and that wherever he found a thought, no matter what, he could express it so tersely, so clearly, and with such smoothness of versification, as to give it an everlasting currency."

De Quincey says: "It is an accumulation of diamond-dust without principles of coherency. . . . It is, indeed, the realization of anarchy; and one amusing test of this may be found in the fact that different commentators have deduced from it the very opposite doctrines. In some instances, this apparent antinomy is doubtful, and dependent on the ambiguities or obscurities of the expression. But in others it is fairly deducible; and the cause lies in the elliptical structure of the work."

Without attempting to unravel the mysteries of Pope's philosophy,—if any such there be,—and without deciding whether this poem reflects the well-known skeptical ideas of Bolingbroke, or whether it was intended as an honest endeavor "to meet and grapple with the rising want of faith in France," let us observe some of its most characteristic passages. Here is one of the most striking:

Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
 Man never is but always to be blest;
 The soul uneasy, and confined from home,
 Rests and expatiates in a life to come.
 Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
 Sees God in clouds or hears him in the wind;
 His soul, proud science never taught to stray
 Far as the solar walk or milky way:

Yet simple Nature to his hope has given
 Behind the cloud-topp'd hill an humbler heaven ;
 Some safer world, in depth of woods embraced,
 Some happier island in the watery waste,
 Where slaves once more their native land behold,
 No friends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
 To *be*, contents his natural desire,
 He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire,
 But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
 His faithful dog shall bear him company.

And here is another, equally well known but more open to criticism :

Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate,
 All but the page prescribed, their present state ;
 From brutes what men, from men what spirits know ;
 Or who would suffer being here below ?
 The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
 Had he thy reason, would he skip and play ?
 Pleased to the last, he crops the flowery food,
 And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.
 Oh, blindness to the future kindly given
 That each may fill the circle marked by heaven !
 Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
 A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
 Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,
 And now a bubble burst, and now a world !

This poem, like the *Essay on Criticism*, is remarkable for the number of brilliant and semi-detached thoughts which it contains, condensed into couplets or single lines. The following are a few examples :

“ Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
 The proper study of mankind is Man.”

“ For forms of government let fools contest ;
 Whate'er is best administered is best.”

“ O Happiness ! our being's end and aim !”

"Order is Heaven's first law ; and this confest,
Some are, and must be, greater than the rest."

"Honor and shame from no condition rise ;
Act well your part, there all the honor lies."

"Know then this truth (enough for man to know),
'Virtue alone is happiness below.'"

"After all," says M. Taine, "is there anything in the verses of this poem but decoration? Translate them literally into prose, and of all those beauties there remains not one. If the reader dissects Pope's arguments, he will hardly be moved by them; he would instinctively think of Pascal's *Pensées*, and remark upon the astonishing difference between a versifier and a man. A good epitome, a good bit of style, well worked out, well written, he would say, and nothing further. Clearly the beauty of the verses arose from the difficulty overcome, the well-chosen sounds, the symmetrical rhythms; this was all, and it was not much. A great writer is a man who, having passions, knows his dictionary and grammar; Pope thoroughly knew his dictionary and his grammar, but he stopped there."

Edward Young, a clergyman of the English Church, inspired with grief at the death of his wife and children, wrote a series of half-didactic, half-imaginative, poems called *The Complaint; or, Night Thoughts*. This work was published in 1742, and consists of nine *Nights* or meditations on such subjects as *Life, Death, and Immortality; Time and Friendship; The Christian Triumph; The Infidel Reclaimed; Virtue's Apology; A Moral Survey of the Nocturnal Heavens*. The poem is written in heroic blank verse, and is of great length. The general tone of the work is exceedingly gloomy and sombre, and yet there are frequent brilliant flashes of imagination, and an elevation of style scarcely to be expected in a poem written upon such themes. Very much, however, of the grief which the

author seems to exhibit is paraded merely for effect; the reader cannot feel that it all comes from the depths of the heart; his outbursts of sorrow have not all the genuineness of spontaneity. And yet his didactic utterances are fresh and sincere; much more so, we shall find, than those of Pope. This poem, like the two last mentioned, abounds in epigrammatic passages which have since become current quotations or popular proverbs. Without these, in fact, its great length, its sombre tone, and its declamatory style, would probably ere this have doomed it to general neglect, if not to oblivion. The following are familiar examples:

"Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep!"

"Man's foresight is conditionally wise."

"Wisdom, though richer than Peruvian minds,
And sweeter than the sweet ambrosial hive,
What is she, but the means of happiness?"

"Friendship's the wine of life; but friendship new
Is neither strong nor pure."

"Life makes the soul dependent on the dust,
Death gives her wings to mount above the spheres."

"Man! know thyself. All wisdom centres there."

"A Christian is the highest style of man."

"No man is happy till he thinks on Earth
There breathes not a more happy than himself."

"An undevout astronomer is mad."

"Procrastination is the thief of time."

Many of Young's illustrations and comparisons are decidedly wanting in dignity; some of them are even weak and childish. As, for instance, the following:

“ Let Indians, and the gay, like Indians, fond
Of feather'd fopperies, the Sun adore :
Darkness has more divinity for me.”

“ Though grey our heads, our thoughts and aims are green ;
Like damaged clocks, whose hand and bell dissent.”

“ How great that power, whose providential care
Through these bright orbs' dark centres darts a ray
Of Nature universal threads the whole !
And hangs creation, like a precious gem,
Though little, on the footstool of his throne !
That little gem, how large ! a weight let fall
From a fixed star, in ages can it reach
This distant Earth ?

The student who wishes to pursue the study of this poem farther may find in it some beauties. The two best-known passages are those on *Procrastination* (Night I.), and on the *Last Day* (Night IX.). The following simile has been often quoted :

As from the wing no scar the sky retains ;
The parted wave no furrow from the keel ;
So dies in human hearts the thought of death.

The Vanity of Human Wishes, a poem by Dr. Samuel Johnson, next claims our attention. It was published in 1745, and is an imitation of the tenth satire of Juvenal. Its design is to illustrate the futility of all those objects usually desired by man, as beauty, wealth, long life, fame. The characters selected for illustration are those of well-known personages in modern history. For example, instead of the Sejanus of Juvenal, Johnson has given us Cardinal Wolsey ; and instead of Hannibal, he names Charles XII. of Sweden.

What gave great Villiers to th' assassin's knife,
And fix'd disease on Harley's closing life ?

What murder'd Wentworth, and what exil'd Hyde
By kings protected, and to kings allied?
What but their wish indulged in courts to shine,
And power too great to keep, or to resign?

Macaulay says of this poem: "It is, in truth, not easy to say whether the palm belongs to the ancient or to the modern poet. The couplets in which the fall of Wolsey is described, though lofty and sonorous, are feeble when compared with the wonderful lines which bring before us all Rome in tumult on the day of the fall of Sejanus, the laurels on the door-posts, the white bull stalking towards the capitol, the statues rolling down from their pedestals, the flatterers of the disgraced minister running to see him dragged with a hook through the streets, and to have a kick at his carcase before it is hurled into the Tiber. It must be owned, too, that, in the concluding passage, the Christian moralist has not made the most of his advantages, and has fallen decidedly short of the sublimity of his Pagan model. On the other hand, Juvenal's Hannibal must yield to Johnson's Charles; and Johnson's vigorous and pathetic enumeration of the miseries of a literary life must be allowed to be superior to Juvenal's lamentation over the fate of Demosthenes and Cicero."

Nearly ten years before the appearance of the *Vanity of Human Wishes* Johnson had written and published an imitation of the third satire of Juvenal, which he called *London*. It is rather satirical and descriptive than didactic, and, although its immediate popularity was great, its fame was not so permanent as that of the author's later effort.

The Minstrel; or, the Progress of Genius, is the title of a didactic poem written by James Beattie, and published in 1771. "The design," says the author, "was to trace the progress of a poetical genius, born in a rude age, from the first dawning of fancy and reason till that period at which he may be supposed capable of appearing in the

world as a minstrel; that is, as an itinerant poet and musician—a character which, according to the notions of our forefathers, was not only respectable, but sacred. I have endeavored to imitate Spenser in the measure of his verse, and in the harmony, simplicity, and variety of his composition.”

As an example of the moral disquisitions in this poem, the following stanzas will suffice:

The end and the reward of toil is rest :
 Be all my prayer for virtue and for peace.
 Of wealth and fame, of pomp and power possess'd,
 Who ever felt his weight of woe decrease?
 Ah! what avails the lore of Rome and Greece,
 The lay heaven-prompted, and harmonious string,
 The dust of Ophir, or the Tyrian fleece,
 All that art, fortune, enterprise can bring,
 If envy, scorn, remorse, or pride the bosom wring?

Let Vanity adorn the marble tomb
 With trophies, rhymes, and 'scutcheons of renown,
 In the deep dungeon of some Gothic dome,
 Where night and desolation ever frown.
 Mine be the breezy hill that skirts the down;
 Where a green, grassy turf is all I crave,
 With here and there a violet bestrown,
 Fast by a brook, or fountain's murmuring wave;
 And many an evening sun shine sweetly on my grave.

George Saintsbury writes thus of this poem: “The author has shown his judgment in prefixing no argument to either book, for, in truth, neither admits of one. The poem has neither head nor tail, and the central figure of the youthful Edwin is a mere peg on which to hang descriptive passages, moral disquisitions, and digressions of every kind. The general effect upon the modern reader is exactly that of a sham ruin or a Gothic edifice of the Wyatt period. Yet the poem was, and long continued to be, extremely popular; and it gave the impulse, in many

cases, to the production of much better work than itself. In fact, it exactly reflected the vague and ill-instructed craving of the age for the dismissal of artificial poetry and for a return to nature, and, at the same time, to the romantic style. This fact must always give it an interest which its elegant, second-hand imagery, its feeble Werterisms, and, above all, its extraordinary incoherence, may, on closer acquaintance, fail to sustain."

Several didactic poems which were regarded with favor in their own day, but have since fallen into deserved neglect, we shall pass over with merely brief mention. The large number of such works that appeared in the eighteenth century, when poetry had been reduced to a feeble image of what it had been and should be, shows that the taste for didactic performances must, at that time, have been more general than any true appreciation of the beautiful.

The Pleasures of the Imagination, by Mark Akenside, was published in 1744. It is a long, dull poem in three books, written in the ordinary heroic blank verse, and is entirely wanting in both wit and passion. It contains, however, notwithstanding the abstract nature of the subject, some passages of real beauty and dignity. In its language and diction we are occasionally reminded of Thomson's *Seasons*.

The Pleasures of Melancholy, by Thomas Warton, appeared in 1745. It is a short poem, more descriptive than didactic, and displaying more imagination and feeling than one would expect in such a theme. It may well be read in connection with Milton's *Il Penseroso* and Keats's *Ode on Melancholy*.

The Pleasures of Memory, by Samuel Rogers, was published in 1792. It is composed of two parts, and is written in ten-syllabled rhyming verses. The rhythm is very melodious and the style pleasing, but it lacks both power and imagination. The following lines will serve as a specimen:

Hail, memory, hail! in thy exhaustless mine
 From age to age unnumber'd treasures shine!
 Thought and her shadowy brood thy call obey,
 And place and time are subject to thy sway!
 Thy pleasures most we feel when most alone;
 The only pleasures we can call our own.

Lord Byron declared this piece to be one of the most beautiful didactic poems in our language. But Hazlitt affirmed that, although the sentiments are amiable, it exhibits a decided want of taste and genius.

The Pleasures of Hope, evidently suggested by the preceding poem, was written by Thomas Campbell, and published in 1799. It was received with a burst of enthusiasm, and at once made its author famous. But the critics have handled it severely. "Its fine words and sounding lines," says Wordsworth, "please the generality of readers who never stop to ask themselves the meaning of a passage. The lines—

"Where Andes, giant of the western star,
 With meteor standard to the wind unfurl'd,
 Looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world"—

are sheer nonsense, nothing more than a poetical indigestion. What has a giant to do with a star? What is a meteor standard? But it is useless to inquire the meaning of such stuff." The poem opens as follows:

At summer eve, when Heaven's ethereal bow
 Spans with bright arch the glittering hills below,
 Why to yon mountains turns the musing eye,
 Whose sun-bright summit mingles with the sky?
 Why do those cliffs of shadowy tint appear
 More sweet than all the landscape smiling near?
 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,
 And robes the mountain in its azure hue.

The Sabbath, by James Grahame, published in 1804, is a didactic poem of a religious cast. It is written in blank

verse, and is characterized rather by tenderness than by grace, rather by devout feeling than by depth of poetic imagination. The author has been compared to Cowper, but his poems bear a stronger likeness to those of Young. Byron nicknamed him "Sepulchral Grahame." The *Sabbath* begins thus:

How still the morning of the hallowed day!
Mute is the voice of rural labor, hush'd
The ploughboy's whistle, and the milkmaid's song.
The scythe lies glittering in the dewy wreath
Of tedded grass, mingled with fading flowers,
That yester-morn bloomed waving in the breeze.
Sounds the most faint attract the ear—the hum
Of early bee, the trickling of the dew,
The distant bleating midway up the hill.

One of the most remarkable poems in our language is *The Excursion*, by William Wordsworth, published in 1814. Although there is in this poem a distinct thread of narrative, and numerous descriptive passages, its main object is of a didactic nature; discussing as it does the weightiest questions pertaining to the moral qualities and duties of man, his relations to his fellow-man and to God. It is a long poem, consisting of nine books, and was intended as the second part of an immense work to be called *The Recluse*. The first part of that work had been written by Wordsworth as early as 1805, and was entitled *The Prelude; or, growth of a Poet's Mind*; but it was not published until after his death, in 1850. The third part was never written. The poet, in speaking of his various works, compared his *Excursion* to a Gothic church, the *Prelude* to the antechapel of that church, and his shorter poems to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses ordinarily included in such edifices. The plot of the *Excursion*, if it can be said to have a plot, is as follows:

The poet, meeting with an old Scotch peddler, who from his roving proclivities is called the "Wanderer," is con-

ducted by him to a distant and secluded valley where dwells a strange enthusiast known as the "Solitary." The latter is a lonely, embittered, and miserable man who had been driven into this voluntary exile by the despair of sorrow; but roused into excitement and led into wild excesses by the French Revolution, only to be hunted back again into lonely solitude, perplexed to madness by a multitude of questions pertaining to God and humanity, and overwhelmed with despondency and disbelief. The subject of the *Excursion* is the contrast between this pitiable misanthrope and the cheerful, contemplative Wanderer. The former is the impersonation of skepticism, the latter of Christian philosophy. "The one is a refined and matured soul, full of gentle wisdom and philosophy, calm as a spectator amid the troubles of the world—a man detached from all personal burdens, and passionless as was the poet who created him. The other is intended to be an embodiment of outraged and disappointed humanity, unable to learn the lesson of submission—a fiery, impatient, proud, and passionate spirit; such a one as cannot bend his neck under any spiritual yoke, who demands happiness and delight from earth and heaven, and whose soul chafes and struggles against all the bonds and all the burdens of the flesh. The Wanderer muses tenderly, cheerfully, almost joyfully, about the world in which he continually sees good combating with evil; while the Solitary shuts himself in the recesses of the mountains, and muses with bitter grief and indignation over all the miseries he has known." The greater part of the poem is occupied with the efforts of the Wanderer, and the pastor of a mountain parish, to rescue the Solitary from his state of morbid hopelessness and unbelief. The peddler, the clergyman, and the visionary engage in weary and interminable arguments on the destinies of man, his duties to God, and his relations to society. The whole action of the poem, if action there is any, occupies two days. The scene is in the quiet stillness of the mountains. There is no passion,

no deep feeling. Everything is quiet, calm, and yet cheerful. But nothing relieves the intense monotony of the performance. The beautiful descriptions which are so abundantly thrown in, the didactic anecdotes contributed by the parson, only assist in making that monotony more strongly felt. There is no variety of character—the Wanderer, the Solitary, the parson, each one is Wordsworth. And yet there is in this poem such a loftiness of tone, such a wealth of description, and such a fullness of humanity, that the earnest student cannot fail to derive both pleasure and profit from its perusal. We make but two extracts, the first an example of description, the second of argumentation:

I.

We scaled, without a track to ease our steps,
A steep ascent; and reached a dreary plain,
With a tumultuous waste of huge hill-tops
Before us; savage región! which I paced
Dispirited; when, all at once, behold!
Beneath our feet, a little lowly vale,
A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high
Among the mountains; even as if the spot
Had been, from eldest time by wish of theirs,
So placed, to be shut out from all the world!
Urn-like it was in shape, deep as an urn;
With rocks encompass'd save that to the south
Was one small opening, where a heath-clad ridge
Supplied a boundary less abrupt and close;
A quiet, treeless nook, with two green fields,
A liquid pool that glitter'd in the sun,
And one bare dwelling; one abode, no more
It seem'd the home of poverty and toil,
Though not of want: the little fields, made green
By husbandry of many thrifty years,
Paid cheerful tribute to the moorland house.
There crows the cock, single in his domain;
The small birds find in Spring no thicket there
To shroud them; only from the neighboring vales
The cuckoo, straggling up to the hill-tops,
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.

II.

The wanderer said—"One adequate support
 For the calamities of mortal life
 Exists, one only; an assured belief
 That the procession of our fate, howe'er
 Sad or disturb'd, is order'd by a Being
 Of infinite benevolence and power;
 Whose everlasting purposes embrace
 All accidents, converting them to good.
 The darts of anguish fix not where the seat
 Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
 By acquiescence in the will supreme
 For time and for eternity; by faith,
 Faith absolute in God, including hope,
 And the defense that lies in boundless love
 Of his perfections; with habitual dread
 Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
 Impatiently; ill-done, or left undone,
 To the dishonor of his holy name.
 Soul of our souls and safeguard of the world
 Sustain, thou only canst, the sick of heart;
 Restore their languid spirits, and recall
 Their lost affectionous unto thee and thine!"

The last of the long didactic poems is *The Course of Time*, by Robert Pollok, published in 1827. It is a sketch of the life of man regarded from a spiritual point of view, and is composed of ten books. Although it reveals in its style an effort, on the part of the author, to imitate Milton's *Paradise Lost*, it resembles Young's *Night Thoughts* more nearly than any other poem. Its tone is gloomy and sombre, its manner sometimes inflated if not affected. Its popularity, once considerable, has entirely disappeared except among the religious classes of Scotland, where it is still regarded as a classic. We quote the invocation at the opening of the poem, and also the last lines:

Eternal Spirit! God of truth to whom
 All things seem as they are: Thou who of old
 The prophet's eye unscaled, that nightly saw,
 While heavy sleep fell down on other men,
 In holy vision tranced, the future pass
 Before him, and to Judah's harp attuned
 Burdens which made the pagan mountains shake
 And Zion's cedars bow—inspire my song;
 My eye unscale; me what is substance teach,
 And shadow what, while I of things to come,
 And past, rehearsing, sing the Course of Time,
 The second birth, and final doom of man.

* * * * *

Thus have I sung beyond thy first request,
 Rolling my number o'er the track of man,
 The world at dawn, at mid-day, and decline;
 Time gone, the righteous saved, the wicked damned,
 And God's eternal government approved.

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ALEXANDER POPE: See Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*; Stephen's *Hours in a Library*; De Quincey's *Literature of the Eighteenth Century*; Lowell's *My Study Windows*.

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 ton's *Essays*; Jeffrey's *Essays*; Macaulay's *Essays*; Goldwin Smith's *Wordsworth* (English Men of Letters).

SAMUEL JOHNSON: See *Life*, by James Boswell; Macaulay's *Essays*; Carlyle's *Essays*; Stephen's *Johnson* (English Men of Letters).

CHAPTER XIV.

MISCELLANEOUS POETRY.

Classification—Poems relating to the Passions or the Affections—
 Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard, by Pope—Cowper's Lines on the
 Receipt of my Mother's Picture—Burns's *Cotter's Saturday Night*—
 Reflective, Meditative, and Semi-Didactic Poems—Sir Walter Raleigh
 —The Soul's Errand—Byrd's *My Mind to me a Kingdom Is*—Childe
 Harold's Pilgrimage, by Byron—Shelley's *Queen Mab*—The Revolt
 of Islam—William Cullen Bryant's *Thanatopsis*—J. G. Holland's
 Poems—Bitter-Sweet—Kathrina—Keble's *Christian Year*—Robert
 Browning's Poems—Christmas Eve—Easter Day—Prospice—Imagi-
 native Poetry—Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and *Rape of Lucrece*
 —Byron's *Don Juan*—Coleridge—*Kubla Khan*—The Cloud—To a
 Skylark—Shelley—*Alastor; or, the Spirit of Solitude*—Keats's
Hyperion—Edgar Allen Poe—The Raven—Annabel Lee—William
 Cullen Bryant—The Land of Dreams—Browning and Tennyson—
 Algernon Charles Swinburne—Garden of Proserpine—Walt Whit-
 man—Humorous Poetry—Qualities of Wit and Humor—Miscella-
 neous Humorous Poems—John Gilpin—Burns's *Tam O'Shanter*—
 The Rejected Addresses, by James and Horace Smith—The Ingoldsby
 Legends—Thomas Hood—Thackeray—J. R. Lowell's *Biglow Papers*
 —Other American Humorists—Translations—Homer: Chapman,
 Pope, Tickell, Cowper, Derby, Bryant—Virgil: Gawain Douglas,
 Surrey, Phaier, Stanihurst, Dryden, Pitt, Conington, Morris—
 Other Translations—Horace—Juvenal—Dante—Literary Forgeries
 —Thomas Chatterton—The Mynstrelles Song—James Macpherson
 —Ossian's Poems.

A LARGE number of poems still remain unnoticed because they cannot, by any strict classification, be included in any one of the preceding divisions of poetry. Most of these, however, may be described in one or the other of the following classes:

1. Poems relating to the passions and the affections, but not lyrical in their construction.
2. Poems of a reflective or meditative character, or semi-didactic in their aim or tendency.

3. Poetry of a purely imaginative character not included in any other class.
4. Humorous poetry.
5. Translations.

We propose, in the present chapter, to notice a few of the most noteworthy poems belonging to each of the above-named classes.

1. In the first class may be placed *The Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard*, by Alexander Pope. It is founded on the well-known story of Abelard and Eloisa, who lived in the twelfth century. Abelard, a canon in the Cathedral of Paris, and widely known for his learning, loved Eloisa, the niece of Fulbert, an ecclesiastic, and they were privately espoused. The poetical epistles written by Abelard to Eloisa during the period of their espousal are said to have been the first love-poems written in Northern France. "You composed," says Eloisa in one of her letters to him, "many verses in amorous measure, so sweet, both in their language and their melody, that your name was incessantly in the mouths of all, and even the most illiterate could not be ignorant of you. This it was, chiefly, that made women admire you. And, as most of these songs were on me and my love, they made me known in many countries, and caused many women to envy me. Every tongue spoke of your Eloisa; every street, every house, resounded with my name."

These epistles and love-poems, it has been truthfully said, when collected, composed the first book that had been produced in Europe for six hundred years which would give any pleasure in the reading. Notwithstanding the private espousal of Abelard and Eloisa and their mutual devotion, Eloisa, through a false sentiment of generosity and religious sentiment, refused marriage, and they finally retired, each to a separate convent, where they passed the remainder of their lives in seclusion. "It was many years after this separation," says Pope, "that a letter of Abelard's to a friend, which contained the history of his

misfortunes, fell into the hands of Eloisa. This, awakening all her tenderness, occasioned those celebrated letters out of which the following is partly extracted. Abelard died in 1142, and Eloisa in 1163; they were buried, side by side, in the monastery of the Paraclete; the tomb was afterwards removed to the cemetery of Pere la Chaise, in Paris, where it now stands."

The closing lines in Pope's poem may be quoted as a fair illustration of the character of the whole:

May one kind grave unite each hapless name,
And graft my love immortal on thy fame!
Then, ages hence, when all my woes are o'er,
When this rebellious heart shall beat no more;
If ever chance two wandering lovers brings
To Paraclete's white walls and silver springs,
O'er the pale marble shall they join their heads;
And drink the falling tears each other sheds;
Then sadly say, with mutual pity moved,
"Oh may we never love as these have loved!"
And sure if fate some future bard shall join
In sad similitude of griefs to mine,
Condemn'd whole years in absence to deplore,
And image charms he must behold no more;
Such, if there be, who loves so long, so well;
Let him our sad, our tender story tell;
The well-sung woes will soothe my pensive ghost;
He best can paint them who shall feel them most.

Hallam says: "Pope has done great injustice to Eloisa, in his unrivaled epistle, by putting the sentiments of a coarse and abandoned woman into her mouth. Her refusal to marry Abelard arose, not from an abstract predilection for the name of mistress above that of wife, but from her disinterested affection, which would not deprive him of the prospect of ecclesiastical dignities, to which his genius and renown might lead him."

M. Taine says: "I wish I could admire Pope's works of

imagination, but I cannot. In vain I read the testimony of his contemporaries, and even that of the moderns, and repeat to myself that in his time he was the prince of poets; that his *Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard* was received with a cry of enthusiasm; that a man could not then imagine a finer expression of true passion; that to this very day it is learned by heart, like the speech of Hippolyte in the *Phèdre* of Racine; that Johnson, the great literary critic, ranked it among 'the happiest productions of the human mind;' that Lord Byron himself preferred it to the celebrated ode of Sappho. I read it again and am bored; this is not as it ought to be; but, in spite of myself, I yawn, and I open the original letters of Eloisa to find the cause of my weariness."

We may include, also, in this division Cowper's very pathetic little poem, *Lines on the Receipt of My Mother's Picture*. This production is remarkable for its purity and tenderness of sentiment, rather than for any vividness of imagination or any more than ordinary beauty of expression. It is the genuine depth of feeling, which we know to come direct from the poet's heart, that we admire. The manner, too, in which past scenes and events are depicted is charming because of its artlessness.

I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
 I saw the hearse, that bore thee slow away,
 And, turning from my nurs'ry window, drew
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
 Thy maidens, griev'd themselves at my concern,
 Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
 What ardently I wish'd, I long believ'd,
 And, disappointed still, was still deceiv'd.
 By expectation ev'ry day beguiled,
 Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
 Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
 Till, all my stock of infant-sorrow spent,
 I learn'd at last submission to my lot,
 But, though I less deplor'd thee, ne'er forgot.

The poem is marred, however, by the frequency with which the author refers to himself in a derogatory strain—an humble, but none the less disagreeable, species of egotism. It is also rendered faulty by the intermixture of trivial and vulgar thoughts and circumstances with those of a graver and nobler character. For example:

Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit or confectionery plum.

Yet there is much beauty in the following similes, notwithstanding the labored air which seems, at first, to disfigure them:

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd)
Shoots into port at some well haven'd isle,
Where spices breathe and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reach'd the shore
"Where tempests never beat, nor billows roar,"
And thy lov'd consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchor'd by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distress'd—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,
Sails ripp'd, seams op'ning wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosp'rous course.

The Cotter's Saturday Night, by Robert Burns, is one of the noblest poems in our language. The hint of the plan of this poem was taken from Fergusson's *Farmer's Ingle*, but the sentiment had its origin in the actual home-life of the poet and the influence of those solemn words, "Let us worship God," uttered by his own "priest-like" father

at the time of family prayers. Hazlitt says: "The *Cotter's Saturday Night* is a noble and pathetic picture of human manners, mingled with a fine religious awe. It comes over the mind like a slow and solemn strain of music. The soul of the poet aspires from the scene of low-thoughted care, and reposes, in trembling hope, on 'the bosom of its Father and its God.'" Hardly anything can be more touching than the following stanzas, whether they describe human interests, or breathe a lofty, devotional spirit.

The toil-worn Cotter frae his labor goes,
 This night his weekly toil is at an end,
 Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
 Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
 And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
 Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
 Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher through
 To meet their dad, wi' flichterin noise and glee.
 His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonilie,
 His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
 The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
 Does a' his weary, carking cares beguile,
 An' makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

Belyve the elder bairns come drapping in,
 At service out, amang the farmers roun';
 Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
 A cannie errand to a neebor town;
 Their eldest hope, their Jennie, woman grown,
 In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
 Comes hame, perhaps, to show a braw new gown,
 Or deposit her sair-won penny-fee,
 To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

Wi' joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,
 An' each for others' welfare kindly spiers;
 The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
 Each tells the uncoss that he sees or hears:

The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years ;
 Anticipation forward points the view ;
 The mither, wi' her needle an' her shears,
 Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new ;
 The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

* * * * *

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
 They, round the ingle, form a circle wide ;
 The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
 The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride :
 His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
 His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare ;
 Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
 He wales a portion with judicious care ;
 And " Let us worship God !" he says wi' solemn air.

* * * * *

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
 The saint, the father, and the husband prays ;
 Hope " springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
 That thus they all shall meet in future days :
 There ever bask in uncreated rays,
 No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,
 In such society, yet still more dear ;
 While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

2. *Poems of a reflective or meditative character, or which are semi-didactic in their aim or tendency.*—In this class is included a very large number of short poems, some of which possess high merit. Among the most remarkable of these we may mention two by Sir Walter Raleigh: *The Soul's Errand* and *The Lye*. We quote two stanzas from the latter :

Goe, soule, the bodies guest,
 Upon a thankelesse arrant ;
 Feare not to touche the best,
 The truth shall be thy warrant ;
 Goe, since I needs must dye,
 And give the world the lye.

Goe, tell the court it glowes
 And shines like rotten wood;
 Goe tell the church it showes
 What's good, and doth no good;
 If church and court reply,
 Then give them both the lye.

Another short poem, very similar in character, written as early as 1588 by one William Byrd, chaplain to the queen, is entitled *My Mind to me a Kingdome Is*:

My minde to me a kingdome is;
 Such perfect joy therein I finde
 As farre exceeds all earthly blisse,
 That God or nature hath assignde:
 Though much I want, that most would have,
 Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

Content I live, this is my stay;
 I seek no more than may suffice;
 I presse to beare no haughtie sway:
 Look, what I lack my mind supplies.
 Loe! thus I triumph like a king,
 Content with that my mind doth bring.

The two poems last named are included in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.*

Among the longer poems of this class we shall include Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, published in four parts between 1812 and 1818. The plan of the poem is thus described by the author: "It was written, for the most part, amid the scenes which it attempts to describe. It was begun in Albania; and the parts relative to Spain and Portugal were composed from the author's observations in those countries. The scenes attempted to be sketched are in Spain, Portugal, Epirus, Acarnania, and Greece; the third canto describes scenes in Belgium, Switzerland, and the Valley of the Rhine; and canto

* See page 306 of this volume.

four is chiefly occupied with Rome. . . . A fictitious character is introduced for the sake of giving some connection to the piece, which, however, makes no pretension to regularity. It has been suggested to me by friends, on whose opinion I set a high value, that in this fictitious character, Childe Harold, I may incur the suspicion of having intended some real personage; this I beg leave, once for all, to disclaim. Harold is the creation of the imagination for the purpose I have stated. In some trivial particulars, and those merely local, there might be grounds for such a notion; but in the main points, none whatever."

The poem is, in reality, nothing more than a series of gloomy but poetical meditations, strung together upon a slight thread of narrative, and relieved, now and then, by episodic pictures and passages of brilliant description. It is written in the nine-lined Spenserian stanza, a measure to which Byron was particularly partial; and in the beginning of the first canto the poet has endeavored still further to imitate Spenser by using quaint and obsolete words and forms of expression, such as are found in the *Faerie Queene*. But these affected archaisms are very soon abandoned. The poem is, in great measure, particularly in the third canto, an autobiography, and, notwithstanding his disclaimer, which we have quoted above, the poet himself is the hero. For instance, no critic has ever written a more accurate or a more complete analysis of Byron's character than that which is found in the following stanzas:

Yet must I think less wildly :—I *have* thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of fantasy and flame :
And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poison'd. 'Tis too late !
Yet am I changed ; though still enough the game
In strength to bear what time can not abate,
And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate. . . .

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
 Of men to herd with Man ; with whom he held
 Little in common ; untaught to submit
 His thoughts to others, though his soul was quell'd
 In youth by his own thoughts ; still uncompell'd,
 He would not yield dominion of his mind
 To spirits against whom his own rebell'd ;
 Proud though in desolation, which could find,
 A life within itself, to breathe without mankind. . . .

Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
 Till he had peopled them with beings bright
 As their own beams ; and earth, and earth-born jars,
 And human frailties were forgotten quite :
 Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
 He had been happy ; but this clay will sink
 Its spark immortal, envying it the light
 To which it mounts, as if to break the link
 That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
 Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
 Droop'd as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,
 To whom the boundless air alone were home :
 Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
 As eagerly the barred-up bird will beat
 His breast and beak against his wiry dome
 Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat
 Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat.*

A contemporary critic, speaking of Byron's characteristic tendency to paint his own passions and to dwell upon his own morbid inclinations, says : " It is not the passion of a mind struggling with misfortune, or the hopelessness of its desires, but of a mind preying upon itself, and disgusted with or indifferent to all other things. There is nothing less poetical than this sort of unaccommodating selfishness. There is nothing more repulsive than this sort

* *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III., 7-15.

of ideal absorption of all the interests of others, of the good and ills of life, in the ruling passion and moody abstraction of a single mind, as if it would make itself the centre of the universe, and there was nothing worth cherishing but its intellectual diseases."

There are in *Childe Harold* many epigrammatic and terse expressions, now often quoted without their source being known. We have space for but few:

"He who ascends to mountain-tops shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind
Must look down on the hate of those below."

"Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not,
Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow?"

Of the grasshopper, he says:

"He is an evening reveler, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill."

Of the stars:

"Ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a star."

The best-known passages in this poem are the Description of the Battle of Waterloo (Canto III., 21-29), and the Apostrophe to the Ocean (Canto IV., 178-184). The following reference to Washington is worthy of notice:

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered be,
And freedom find no champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprung forth a Pallas, arm'd and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourished in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest, midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

Most of the longer poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley may be included in this division. *Queen Mab*, published in 1813, is "a wild phantasmagoria of beautiful description and fervent declamation," disfigured by the introduction of sophistical arguments and sneers at Christianity, which are still further amplified in the notes appended to the poem. It is written in irregular, unrhymed verses, like the *Thalaba* of Southey. There are in the poem, notwithstanding its obvious defects, many passages of great power and beauty. The opening stanzas are among the best:

How wonderful is Death,
 Death and his brother Sleep!
 One, pale as yonder waning moon,
 With lips of lurid blue;
 The other, rosy as the morn
 When, throned on ocean's wave,
 It blushes o'er the world:
 Yet both so passing wonderful!

Hath then the gloomy Power,
 Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres,
 Seized on her sinless soul?
 Must then that peerless form
 Which love and admiration cannot view
 Without a beating heart, those azure veins
 Which steal like streams along a field of snow,
 That lovely outline, which is fair
 As breathing marble, perish?
 Must putrefaction's breath
 Leave nothing of this heavenly sight
 But loathesomeness and ruin?
 Spare nothing but a gloomy theme
 On which the lightest heart might moralize?
 Or is it only a sweet slumber
 Stealing o'er sensation,
 Which the breath of roseate morning
 Chaseth into darkness?
 Will Ianthe wake again,

And give that faithful bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Light, life, and rapture from her smile?

Her dewy eyes are closed,
And on their lids, whose texture fine
Scarce hides the dark blue orbs beneath,
The baby Sleep is pillowed
Her golden tresses shade
The bosom's stainless pride,
Curling like tendrils of the parasite
Around a marble column.

Hark! whence that rushing sound?
'Tis like the wondrous strain
That round a lonely ruin swells,
Which, wandering on the echoing shore,
The enthusiast hears at evening:
'Tis softer than the west wind's sigh;
'Tis wilder than the unmeasured notes
Of that strange lyre whose strings
The genii of the breezes sweep:
Those lines of rainbow light
Are like the moonbeams when they fall
Through some cathedral window, but the tints
Are such as may not find
Comparison on earth.
Behold the chariot of the fairy queen!
Celestial coursers paw the unyielding air;
Their filmy pennons at her word they furl,
And stop obedient to the reins of light:
These the queen of spells drew in;
She spread a charm around the spot,
And leaning graceful from the ethereal car,
Long did she gaze, and silently,
Upon the slumbering maid.

The extreme aggressiveness of *Queen Mab* has, perhaps, more than anything else, contributed to Shelley's unpopularity, and led to his being unjustly characterized as an

enemy not only to religion, but to morality. He himself, writing of this work in 1821, says: "I doubt not but that it is perfectly worthless in point of literary composition; and that in all that concerns moral and political speculation, as well as in the subtler discriminations of metaphysical and religious doctrine, it is still more crude and immature. I am a devoted enemy to religious, political, and domestic oppression; and I regret this publication, not so much from literary vanity, as because I fear it is better fitted to injure than to serve the sacred cause of freedom."

The Revolt of Islam, or, as it was originally called, *Laon and Cythna*, is an eager poetical protest against the artificial restraints of society and the oppressions of government. It was published in 1818. "All of Shelley's previous experiences and all his aspirations—his passionate belief in friendship, his principle of the equality of women with men, his demand for bloodless revolution, his confidence in eloquence and reason to move nations, his doctrine of free love, his vegetarianism, his hatred of religious intolerance and tyranny—are blent together and concentrated in the glowing cantos of this wonderful romance. The hero, Laon, is himself idealized. The heroine, Cythna, is the helpmate he had always dreamed, the woman exquisitely feminine, yet capable of being fired with male enthusiasms, and of grappling the real problems of our nature with a man's firm grasp. In the first edition of the poem he made Laon and Cythna brother and sister, not because he believed in the desirability of incest, but because he wished to throw a glove down to society, and to attack the intolerance of custom in its stronghold. In the preface he tells us that it was his purpose to kindle in the bosoms of his readers 'a virtuous enthusiasm for those doctrines of liberty and justice, that faith and hope in something good which neither violence nor misapprehension nor prejudice can ever wholly extinguish among mankind;' to illustrate 'the growth and progress of individual mind aspiring

after excellence, and devoted to the love of mankind; and to celebrate love 'as the sole law which should govern the moral world.' The wild, romantic treatment of this didactic motive makes the poem highly characteristic of its author. It is written in Spenserian stanzas, with a rapidity of movement and a dazzling brilliance that are Shelley's own. The story relates the kindling of a nation to freedom at the cry of a poet-prophet, the temporary triumph of the good cause, the final victory of despotic force, and the martyrdom of the hero, together with whom the heroine falls a willing victim. It is full of thrilling incidents and lovely pictures; yet the tale is the least part of the poem; and few readers have probably been able either to sympathize with its visionary characters or to follow the narrative without weariness.*

Another critic says: "Shelley's genius was of a high order; but instead of possessing it, he was possessed by it, as mad men were said, in ignorant ages, to be possessed by a devil: his Muse is a Pythoness upon her tripod, torn and convulsed by the utterance of which she is the channel. This possession, if I may so style it, is the essential characteristic of Shelley's poetry—at once its strength and its weakness, the source of its charm and the origin of its defects. It is unnecessary to contrast this convulsive and morbid, though often admirable force, with the calm and god-like mastery over themselves of the true gods of poetry, of such minds as Homer, as Milton, as Shakspeare."

Thanatopsis is the title of a well-known poem, written in 1816, by William Cullen Bryant. As its name indicates, it is a poetical view of death, and yet it possesses but little of the character of the ordinary didactic poem. With that pensive melancholy which characterizes him, the poet goes forth to commune with Nature and to listen to her teachings,

* *Shelley*. By J. A. Symonds.

while from all around—
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air—
Comes a still voice: Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean shall exist
Thy image.

Then follow musings upon the mutability of all things, and reflections upon the transitory nature of man's existence. But the poet does not seek to carry us beyond the veil which separates this life from that which lies beyond. Nowhere in the poem does he refer even indirectly to the received Christian doctrine of immortality.

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings,
The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good—
Fair forms and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills,
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun—the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between—
The venerable woods—rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green; and poured round all,
Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste—
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man.

And the poet thus sums up and expresses the great incentive for well-doing and right-living in this world:

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan which moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,

Thou go not like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon ; but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

The student can, by no means, omit the study of this truly noble poem. One of Bryant's first productions, it is, without doubt, one of his best, and it mirrors forth many of the characteristics of his later poetry. The love of nature and of solitude, the secret communion with God in the forest or beneath the open sky, the deep and fervent admiration of all things good and beautiful, impart an inexpressible charm to all of his poetry. E. P. Whipple says: "There is no genial delineation of men and women, as individuals, in Bryant's writings. When he glows at the mention of a name, we find it is not a person he is celebrating, but some qualities of that person, abstracted from his personality and idealized. His general tone towards society is harsh. . . . In his poems he continually speaks of escaping from the crowd, of despising the frivolity of society, of hating the everyday work by which man, in this life, keeps up that interesting and slightly important connection between body and soul called 'getting a living.' . . . The result is that, though, perhaps, the first of poets in America, he is not especially an American poet, for what nationalizes genius is not so much the scenery it describes as the human life it idealizes." We shall have occasion to refer again to Bryant, when speaking of the purely imaginative poetry of our language.

The poems of Dr. J. G. Holland may find a place in this division. He is at once the least poetical and one of the most popular of all the American poets. He has the peculiar faculty of writing for the people what the people want to read and can understand. *Bitter-Sweet*, published in 1867, is partly narrative, partly dramatic, and partly lyrical in form ; and the lesson which

it teaches is, that there is no evil without its corresponding good, and that out of wrong right is sure to spring up. In some of the lyrical passages we now and then discover touches of real poetry; but the effect is spoiled by the exceedingly commonplace, even ridiculous, expressions abounding in the colloquial parts of the poem. Compare, for example, the following:

A Song of Faith.

Day will return with a fresher boon;
God will remember the world!

Night will come with a newer moon;
God will remember the world!

Evil is only the slave of Good;
Sorrow the servant of Joy;
And the soul is mad that refuses food
Of the meanest in God's employ.

The fountain of joy is fed by tears,
And love is lit by the breath of sighs;
The deepest griefs and the wildest fears
Have holiest ministries.

Strong grows the oak in the sweeping storm;
Safely the flower sleeps under the snow;
And the farmer's hearth is never warm
Till the cold wind starts to blow.

Day will return with a fresher boon;
God will remember the world!
Night will come with a newer moon;
God will remember the world!

The Question Illustrated by Nature.

(Scene on the cellar stairs.)

Ruth.

Look where you step, or you'll stumble!
Care for your coat, or you'll crock it;
Down with your crown, man! Be humble!
Put your head into your pocket,
Else something or other will knock it.

Don't hit that jar of cucumbers
 Standing on the broad stair!
 They have not waked from their slumbers
 Since they stood there.

David.

Yet they have lived in constant jar!
 What remarkable sleepers they are!

Ruth.

Turn to the left—shun the wall—
 One step more—that is all!
 Now we are on the ground
 I will show you around.
 * * * * *
 I'm afraid to show you anything more;
 For parsnips and art are so very long,
 That the passage back to the cellar door
 Would be through a mile of song.
 But Truth owns me for an honest teller;
 And if the honest truth be told,
 I am indebted to you and the cellar
 For a lesson and a cold.
 And one or the other cheats my sight;
 (O silly girl! for shame!)
 Barrels are hooped with rings of light,
 And stopped with tongues of flame.
 Apples have conquered original sin,
 Manna is pickled in brine,
 Philosophy fills the potato bin
 And cider will soon be wine.
 So crown the basket with mellow fruit,
 And brim the pitcher with pearls;
 And we'll see how the old-time dainties suit.
 The old-time boys and girls.

Kathrina: her Life and mine, is very similar to *Bitter-Sweet* in its plan and execution, although it wants the variety of the earlier poem. It is a story in verse of childhood and youth, love, labor, and consummation. The

principal lesson which it aims to teach is faith in God and humble submission to his dispensations; but it abounds in didactic passages relating to a variety of subjects connected with our duties and moral obligations. A single selection will suffice:

“Use! Use! Use!”

I cried impatiently;—“nothing but use!
As if God never made a violet,
... Or hung a harebell, or in kindling gold
Garnished a sunset, or upreared the arch
Of a bright rainbow, or endowed a world—
A universe, indeed—stars, firmament,
The vastitudes of forest and of sea,
Swift brooks and sweeping rivers, virid meads
And fluff of breezy hills—with tints that range
The scale of spectral beauty, till they leave
No glint or glory of the changeful light
Without a revelation! Is this use—
I beg your pardon, love: you say ‘this art’—
The sum and end of art? If it be so,
Then God’s no artist. Are the crystal brooks
Sweeter for singing to the thirsty brutes
That dip their beaded muzzles in the foam?
Burns the tree better that its leaves are green?
Sleeps the sun sounder under canopy
Of gold or rose?”

“Yet beauty has its use,”

Responded she. “Whatever elevates,
Inspires, refreshes, any human soul,
Is useful to that soul. Beauty has use
For you and me. The dainty violet
Blooms in our thought, and sheds its fragrance there;
And we are gainers through its ministry.
All God’s great values wear the drapery
That most becomes them. Beauty may, in truth,
Be incident of art and not be end—
Its form, condition, features, dress, and still
The humblest value of the things of art.
This truth obtains in all God’s artistry.

Does God make beauty for himself, alone?
 He is, and holds, all beauty. Has he need
 To kindle rushes that he may behold
 The glory of his thoughts? or need to use
 His thoughts as plasms for the amorphous clay
 That he may study models? For an end
 Outside himself, he ever speaks himself;
 And end, with him, is use."

Returning now to England, let us briefly notice the beautiful meditative poems which partly compose John Keble's *Christian Year*, a volume which we have already alluded to in our chapter on Lyrical Poetry. "The object of the present publication," says the author, "will be attained if any person find assistance from it in bringing his own thoughts and feelings into more entire unison with those recommended and exemplified in the Prayer Book." Dr. Holmes says of this book: "I opened it, when it came, to the *Fourth Sunday in Lent*, and read that angelic poem, sweeter than anything I can remember since Xavier's, 'My God, I love thee.' I am not a churchman,—I don't believe in planting oaks in flower-pots,—but such a poem as *The Rosebud* makes one's heart a proselyte to the culture it grows from. Talk about it as much as you like; one's breeding shows itself nowhere more than in his religion. A man should be a gentleman in his hymns and prayers; the fondness for 'scenes' among vulgar saints contrasts so meanly with that—

" 'God only and good angels look
 Behind the blissful scene,'—

and that other,—

" 'He could not trust his melting soul
 But in his Maker's sight,'—

that I hope some of them will see this, and read the poem and profit by it."

The hymns interspersed here and there throughout this collection of poems have been published separately, and are noticed in our chapter on Lyrical Poetry. Another collection of meditative poems by the same author is entitled *Lyra Innocentium*; "Thoughts in Verse on Christian Children, their Ways and Privileges." It was published in 1846.

Principal Shairp thus enumerates the characteristic features of the *Christian Year*: "Firstly, a tone of religious feeling, fresh, deep, and tender, beyond what was common even among religious men in the author's day, perhaps in any day; secondly, great intensity and tenderness of home affection; thirdly, a shy and delicate reserve, which loved quiet paths and shunned publicity; fourthly, a pure love of nature, and a spiritual eye to read nature's symbolism."

Many of Robert Browning's poems are, in great measure, "mere searchings into strange deeps of human character and human error," and we know of no class to which they can more properly be assigned than to that which we are now considering. His *Christmas Eve* and *Easter Day*, published in 1850, are, perhaps, the best examples of his meditative poetry; but almost all of his poems, whether narrative, dramatic, or otherwise, are characterized by his tendency to wander off into metaphysical speculation and reflection. Browning is not a popular poet. His audience is a limited one, and his admirers are confined to a comparatively narrow circle of cultured men and women. His poetry seldom reaches the masses; it is above them; they cannot comprehend his genius or understand the strength of his imagination or the depth of his pathos. Ordinary readers are prevented from becoming acquainted with his works by reason of his obscurity and the harshness of his versification. And yet the earnest student cannot fail to discover that, in spite of his defects, Robert Browning is one of our greatest poets. Compare the following poem on death with Bryant's *Thanatopsis* and with Swinburne's *Garden of Proserpine*, mentioned in another place.

Prospice.

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
 The mist in my face,
 When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
 I am nearing the place,
 The power of the night, the press of the storm,
 The post of the foe;
 Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
 Yet the strong man must go;
 For the journey is done and the summit attained,
 And the barriers fall,
 Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
 The reward of it all.
 I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
 The best and the last!
 I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
 And bade me creep past.
 No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
 The heroes of old,
 Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
 Of pain, darkness, and cold,
 For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
 The black minute's at end,
 And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
 Shall dwindle, shall blend,
 Shall change, shall become first a peace, then a joy,
 Then a light, then thy breast,
 O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
 And with God be the rest!

3. *Imaginative poetry, or poetry of the fancy, not easily classified elsewhere.*

Under this head might be included a very large portion of the miscellaneous poems of our literature. We shall be able to notice only a few of the most celebrated or most striking specimens.

Shakspeare's two poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, are works which, though narrative in form, depend mainly upon imagination and the fancy for their

poetic interest. *Venus and Adonis* is based upon the ancient myth-story of the loves of Venus for the hunter. It was Shakspeare's first work, and exhibits all the faults of youth. It contains some fine passages, but they are so obscured by those of an inferior and, indeed, unworthy character, that the student will scarcely derive any profit by searching for them. Upon its first publication this poem attained an immense popularity, and many editions were demanded and exhausted even in the life-time of its great author; but it is now seldom read except by special students. The *Rape of Lucrece* is greatly inferior to *Venus and Adonis*, although it is not lacking in good poetry. The repulsive nature of its subject has, no doubt, tended to prevent its popularity; and, had it not been for its companion poem and the great name of its author, it would, doubtless, have long since been forgotten. Hallam makes the following very just criticism upon these two poems: "The redundancy of blossoms in these juvenile effusions of his unbounded fertility obstructs the reader's attention, and, sometimes, almost leads us to give him credit for less reflection and sentiment than he will be found to display. The style is flowing and, in general, more perspicuous than the Elizabethan poets are wont to be. But I am not sure that they would betray themselves for the works of Shakspeare had they been anonymously published."

In this division also, and for the reasons mentioned above, we shall place Byron's *Don Juan*. This is a poem, consisting of sixteen cantos, written in the Italian *ottava rima* style of versification, and is Byron's longest and most characteristic work. The name of the story, and, perhaps, the original suggestion of it, was derived from the famous Spanish legend of Don Juan de Tenorio, but further than this it has no connection with that romance. Byron's Don Juan is a young Spanish nobleman of a roving disposition and amatory tendencies; and the various adventures through which he is carried serve to exhibit the author's unrivaled power of description and his wealth

of wit, satire, and pathos. The hero, having been detected in a scandalous intrigue with a married woman, is obliged to flee from Spain. He embarks in a ship which is wrecked in the Grecian Archipelago, and all the crew, except himself, perish. He is rescued and sheltered by Haidee, the daughter of Lambro, a pirate chief who is absent on an expedition. Falling violently in love with his protector, they are married; but in the midst of the wedding festivities Lambro returns, and Don Juan is carried to Constantinople to be sold as a slave. There he is bought by the favorite sultana, who introduces him, disguised, into the seraglio. Afterwards, in company with an Englishman named Smith, he escapes, arrives at the city of Ismail, then besieged by the Russians, distinguishes himself in the storming and capture of that place, and is chosen special messenger to convey the news to the Empress Catherine. He is received with favor at the Court of St. Petersburg, and is finally sent as an ambassador to England. The narrative here breaks off abruptly, apparently no nearer the end than in the beginning. The poem seems to have been written without plan, and might have been extended to any length. The merit of this production lies in its exquisite descriptions, in its brilliant and abounding wit, and its covert satire. It has been regarded as highly immoral in its tendencies, not only from the character of the episodes which it relates, but also from the mocking and atheistic tone which pervades it throughout; "everything, in turn, is made the subject of a sneer, and the brilliant but desolating lightning of Byron's sarcasm blasts alike the weeds of hypocrisy and cant, and the flowers of faith and the holiest affections." But M. Taine remarks that this poem is not a eulogy of vice, but rather a satire on the abuses existing in the present state of society. And yet, says he, "there is a malady of heart and mind in the style of *Don Juan* as in Swift. When a man jests amidst his tears it is because he has a poisoned imagination. This kind of laughter is a

spasm, and we see in one man a hardening of the heart, or madness; in another, excitement, or disgust. Byron was exhausted, at least the poet was exhausted in him."

David Macbeth Moir, in his *Sketches of the Poetical Literature of the Past Half Century*, characterizes such poems as *Don Juan*, *Beppo*, and Barry Cornwall's *Ring of Gyges* as the "Ginger-pop School of Poetry." This species of poetry, he says, "was characterized more especially by its light humor; by its approximating and blending together seeming incongruities; by its airy, rapid, picturesque narrative; by its commixture of the grave, the pathetic, and the majestic with the frivolous, the farcical, and the absurd; and bore the same relation to high imaginative verse that ginger-pop bears to champagne, or Grimaldi the clown to John Kemble the tragedian." As an example merely of the happiest style of description to be found in *Don Juan*, a few stanzas from the story of Haidee will suffice:

It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,
With cliffs above, and a broad sandy shore,
Guarded by shoals and rocks as by a host. . . .
And rarely ceased the haughty billow's roar,
Save on the dead long summer days, which make
The outstretch'd ocean glitter like a lake. . . .
And all was stillness, save the sea-bird's cry,
And dolphin's leap, and little billow cross'd
By some low rock or shelve, that made it fret
Against the boundary it scarcely wet. . . .

And thus they wander'd forth, and hand in hand,
Over the shining pebbles and the shells,
Glided along the smooth and harden'd sand,
And in the worn and wild receptacles
Work'd by the storms, yet work'd as it were plann'd,
In hollow halls, with sparry roof and cells,
They turn'd to rest; and, each clasp'd by an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm. . . .

They were alone, but not alone as they
Who, shut in chambers, think it loneliness;
The silent ocean, and the starlight bay,
The twilight glow, which momentarily grew less,
The voiceless sands, and dropping caves that lay
Around them, made them to each other press,
As if there were no life beneath the sky
Save theirs, and that their life could never die.

The poems of Coleridge rank among the most purely imaginative productions of our language. His three great works, *The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, and *Love*, have already been noticed. His fragment of *Kubla Khan* alone remains to be mentioned here. It was composed in 1797, as the author asserted, in a dream. "The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that, indeed, can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things* with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and, taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour; and, on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification that, though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone had been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter."*

* Extract from Note to the first edition, 1818.

The fragment is a wild, fantastic piece, scarcely more intelligible than a dream. The following is the opening stanza :

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree ;
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man,
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round ;
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossom'd many an incense-bearing tree ;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Infolding sunny spots of greenery.

As we have elsewhere remarked, Shelley was, perhaps, the most ideal, the most imaginative, of all the poets. His two short pieces, *The Cloud* and *To a Skylark*, are among the most exquisite examples of fanciful description to be found in our poetry :

(*From The Cloud.*)

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams ;
I bear light shades for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rock'd to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.
I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast ;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.

Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,
 Lightning my pilot sits,
 In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
 It struggles and howls at fits;
 Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
 This pilot is guiding me,
 Lured by the love of the genii that move
 In the depths of the purple sea;
 Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
 Over the lakes and the plains,
 Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
 The Spirit he loves remains;
 And I, all the while, bask in heaven's blue smile,
 Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

(From To a Skylark.)

Like a poet hidden
 In the light of thought,
 Singing hymns unbidden,
 Till the world is wrought
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
 In a palace tower
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour
 With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering unbeholden
 Its ærial hue—
 Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embower'd
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflower'd
 Till the scent it gives
 Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves. . . .

Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow,
 The world should listen then, as I am listening now. ...

"Has any one," asks M. Taine, "has any since Shakespeare and Spenser lighted on such tender, and such grand ecstasies?"

Among Shelley's longer poems, his *Alastor; or, the Spirit of Solitude*, is the most purely imaginative. It was designed, as he says, to represent a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius, led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe. The mind of his hero, however, becomes awakened, and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He seeks in vain for the original of his conception; and, blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave. In this, as in the *Revolt of Islam*, Shelley doubtless designed to illustrate, in a measure, his own experience. We have already referred to this poem in our chapter on Descriptive Poetry. We quote here the passage describing the death of the young hero:

When on the threshold of the green recess
 The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death
 Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,
 Did he resign his high and holy soul
 To images of the majestic past,
 That paused within his passive being now,
 Like winds that bear sweet music when they breathe
 Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place
 His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk
 Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone
 Reclined his languid head; his limbs did rest,
 Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink
 Of that obscurest chasm;—and thus he lay,
 Surrendering to their final impulses

The hovering powers of life. Hope and Despair,
The torturers, slept: no mortal pain or fear
Marred his repose; the influxes of sense,
And his own being unalloyed by pain,
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there
At peace, and faintly smiling. His last sight
Was the great moon, which o'er the western line
Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,
With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed
To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills
It rests; and still, as the divided frame
Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,
That ever beat in mystic sympathy
With Nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still.
And, when two lessening points of light alone
Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp
Of his faint respiration scarce did stir
The stagnate night:—till the minutest ray
Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.
It paused—it fluttered. But, when heaven remained
Utterly black, the murky shades involved
An image silent, cold, and motionless,
As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.
Even as a vapor fed with golden beams
That ministered on sunlight, ere the west
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame—
No sense, no motion, no divinity—
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings
The breath of heaven did wander—a bright stream
Once fed with many voiced waves—a dream
Of youth which night and time have quenched forever—
Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now.

Hyperion, a poetical fragment, by John Keats, next claims our attention. It was never completed, for, as the author asserts, "there are too many Miltonic inversions in it. Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful, or, rather, in an artist's humor." At the time of

its first appearance it was received by the critics with the most extravagant praise. Byron said: "The fragment of *Hyperion* seems actually inspired by the Titans, and is as sublime as Æschylus." And Leigh Hunt pronounced it "not faultless, but nearly so." There are, indeed, in the poem, many passages easy, finished, beautiful, even classically elegant. The opening verses have seldom been excelled:

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery moon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feathered grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Pressed her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large footmarks went
No further than to where his feet had strayed,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptered; and his realmless eyes were closed;
While his bowed head seemed listening to the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seemed no force could wake him from his place;
But there came one, who with a kindred hand
Touched his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
She was a goddess of the infant world;
By her in stature the tall Amazon
Had stood a pigmy's height: she would have ta'en
Achilles by the hair, and bent his neck;
Or with a finger stayed Ixion's wheel.

Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
 Pedestaled haply in a palace court,
 When sages looked to Egypt for their lore.
 But oh! how unlike marble was that face!
 How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
 Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self!
 There was a listening fear in her regard,
 As if calamity had but begun;
 As if the vanward clouds of evil days
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
 Was, with its stored thunder, laboring up.
 One hand she pressed upon that aching spot
 Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain;
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck
 She laid, and to the level of his ear
 Leaning, with parted lips some words she spake
 In solemn tenor and deep organ tone. . . .
 As when, upon a tranced summer night,
 Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,
 Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
 Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
 Save from one gradual, solitary gust,
 Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave;
 So came these words and went.

"Keats deserves high praise," says Shaw, "for one very peculiar and original merit; he has treated the classical mythology in a way absolutely new, representing the pagan deities not merely as mere abstractions of art, nor as mere creatures of popular belief, but giving them passions and affections like our own, highly purified and idealized, however, and in exquisite accordance with the lovely scenery of ancient Greece and Italy, and with the golden atmosphere of primeval existence." And another critic remarks: "Of all the great poets, Keats was the most literary, and it was natural that he should be exacting. To him poetry was an end in itself; its mission was

simply to fill and satisfy the spirit with images of objective loveliness. His philosophy, so far as he had one, was a judicious quietism—a seeking of the beautiful where it was to be found, in the ordered stability of nature, and in the rich moments of life which come to those who are ready for them. It is certain that he came nearer than Shelley to the temper of most great poets, of Homer and Sophocles, of Pindar and Shakspeare, of Chaucer and Goethe.”

Very different from the poems of Shelley and Keats, and yet burning with the same poetic ardor, and inspired with an imaginative genius scarcely, if at all, inferior, are the poetical productions of our American Shelley, Edgar Allen Poe. *The Raven* is a poem which has no parallel in our literature. Its versification is different from any ever before attempted, and its peculiar melody is in keeping with the weird imagery which pervades and animates the poem. It reminds the reader of the ominous, measured beating of the waves, at the solemn midnight, against a spirit-haunted shore.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there, wondering,
 fearing,
 Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before ;
 But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
 And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, “Lenore?”
 This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, “Lenore!”
 Merely this and nothing more!

* * * * * * * *
 And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
 On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door ;
 And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,
 And the lamp-light o’er him streaming, throws his shadow on the
 floor ;
 And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor.
 Shall be lifted—nevermore !

We feel that we have but lately emerged from the land
of shadows, from “the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.”

We seem to hear the solemn bells, rung by demon-hands, tolling the knell of all our dearest hopes, our fondest aspirations. Let us turn for relief to another poem by the same author, that sweet story of love and fancy, *Annabel Lee* :

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee ;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.
I was a child and *she* was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea :
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
I, and my Annabel Lee ;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee ;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we—
Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee ;

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
 And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
 Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
 In the sepulchre there by the sea,
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.

If space would permit, we might continue quoting from this most imaginative of American poets. But he who wishes to make a complete study of *The Raven*, or of the rather incoherent imagery of the longer poem, *Al Aaraaf*, or of the changing melody of the *Bells*, or of the delicate fancy which characterizes *Eulalie* and *Lenore*, must turn to the complete poetical works of Poe. A late English critic writes thus: "In much that Poe wrote there is evidence of the insanity of genius, the waywardness and fitfulness of great power prostituted, and the maudlin dreariness of a wasted and hopeless existence. But least of all is this seen in his poetry. When worshiping at the shrine of the Muses, he was devout enough. He was invariably on his best behavior when he entered their presence. Consequently the best of his life was infused into his poetry. He locked Caliban in the closet before he wrestled with the spirit of purity and harmony."

The imaginative poetry of William Cullen Bryant is of quite a different type again. He is never strongly passionate. His fancy never runs wild, never wanders beyond the limits of probability. But there is a sweetness, a melody, a richness, even a vein of high philosophy, in his pictures which the best of England's poets has scarce excelled. In purely fanciful description Bryant's *Land of Dreams* has but few equals:

A mighty realm is the Land of Dreams,
 With steepes that hang in the twilight sky,
 And weltering oceans and trailing streams,
 That gleam where the dusky valleys lie.

But over its shadowy border flow
Sweet rays from the world of endless morn,
And the nearer fountains catch the glow,
And flowers in the nearer fields are born.

The souls of the happy dead repair,
From their bowers of light, to that bordering land,
And walk in the fainter glory there,
With the souls of the living, hand in hand.

One calm, sweet smile, in that shadowy sphere,
From eyes that open on earth no more,—
One warning word from a voice once dear,—
How they rise in the memory o'er and o'er!

Far off from those hills that shine by day,
And fields that bloom in the heavenly gales,
The Land of Dreams goes stretching away
To dimmer mountains and darker vales.

There lie the chambers of guilty delight,
There walk the spectres of guilty fear,
And soft, low voices, that float through the night,
Are whispering sin in the helpless ear.

Dear maid, in thy childhood's opening flower,
Scarce weaned from the love of childish play!
The tears on whose cheeks are but the shower
That freshens the early bloom of May!

Thine eyes are closed, and over thy brow
Pass thoughtful shadows and joyous gleams,
And I know, by thy moving lips, that now
Thy spirit strays in the Land of Dreams.

Light-hearted maiden, O heed thy feet!
O keep where that beam of Paradise falls,
And only wander where thou mayst meet
The blessed ones from its shining walls.

So shalt thou come from the Land of Dreams,
With love and peace to this world of strife;
And the light that over that border streams
Shall lie on the path of thy daily life.

This is very tame, after reading Shelley and Poe, but it is true poetry, and it is wholesome. We read such poetry as this, and we rise refreshed, as having partaken of that which adds to our intellectual stature and our spiritual strength.

A few of Robert Browning's, as well as some of Mrs. Browning's, poems might also find a place in this division. But the best-known pieces of both—those upon which their fame rests—belong elsewhere, and are discussed in other chapters. Several of Tennyson's shorter poems also belong here. We shall only designate as examples *The Palace of Art*; *The Lotos Eaters*; *A Day Dream*; *The Islet*; and *The Voice of the Peak*.

Perhaps the most musical of all the poets is Algernon Charles Swinburne; and his collection of *Poems and Ballads*, published in 1866, is remarkable, not only for the wonderful wealth of melody which is poured forth from the verses therein contained, but also for the intensity of passion and the extravagance of fancy which he displays.

"It is a series of wild and Gothic pieces," says a critic, "full of sensuous and turbid passion, lavishing a prodigious wealth of music and imagery upon the most perilous themes, and treating them in an openly defiant manner." Many of the passages in this collection of poems are, to say the least, of questionable morality, and the tone of the work, as a whole, is decidedly an unhealthy one. Aside from his "wonderful gift of rhythm" and his unequalled power over the musical capacities of our language, but little can be said in praise of Swinburne as a poet. He is, or aspires to be, the founder of a new school of poetry—a school of poetry which is to literature what the modern pre-Raphaelite school of painters is to art. Readers of his

poems, who care to look beyond the excessive richness of music which characterizes the rhythm and metre of his verses, will discover, in the sentiments which they contain, a strange and unpleasant contrast. The prevailing tone of his poetry is that of a morbid sentimentalism, a melancholy hopelessness, a weary discontent with the things that are, a sensuous longing for the things that might have been.

Sick dreams and sad of a dull delight,
 For what shall it profit when men are dead
 To have dreamed, to have loved with the whole soul's might,
 To have looked for day when the day is fled?
 Let come what will, there is one thing worth—
 To have had fair love in the life upon earth,
 To have held love safe till the day grew night,
 While skies had color and lips were red.*

We quote the following stanzas from *The Garden of Proserpine*:

I am tired of tears and laughter,
 And men that laugh and weep,
 Of what may come hereafter
 For men that sow to reap;
 I am weary of days and hours,
 Blown buds of barren flowers,
 Desires and dreams and powers,
 And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
 And far from eye or ear,
 Wan waves and wet winds labor,
 Weak ships and spirits steer;
 They drive adrift, and whither
 They wot not who make thither;
 But no such winds blow hither,
 And no such things grow here.

* * * * *

* From *The Triumph of Time*, in *Poems and Ballads*.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell ;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes ;
And well though lone reposes,
In the end it is not well.

We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure ;
To-day will die to-morrow ;
Time stoops to no man's lure ;
And love grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be—
That no life lives forever,
That dead men rise up never,
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light,
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight,
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal,
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

An American disciple of the pre-Raphaelite school is Walt Whitman, scarcely recognized in his own country as a poet, but, if we may believe Thomas Carlyle, "a man furnished for the highest of all enterprises—that of being

the poet of his age." His verses have been collected into a single volume called *Leaves of Grass*. They have neither rhyme nor metre, neither form nor melody. His poetry, although well received in England, has but few admirers in America, and has been very justly characterized as "mere dirty rubbish, full of blatancy and obscenity." As a fair specimen of his best style, we quote the following, one of his very latest productions:

Spirit that formed this Scene.

(Written in Platte Cañon, Colorado.)

Spirit that formed this scene,
 These tumbled rock-piles grim and red,
 These reckless heaven-ambitious peaks,
 These gorges, turbulent-clear streams, this naked freshness,
 These formless wild arrays, for reasons of their own!
 I know thee, savage spirit—we have communed together,
 Mine too such wild arrays, for reasons of their own;
 Was't charged against my chants they had forgotten art?
 To fuse within themselves its rules precise and delicatessen?
 The lyrist's measured beat, the wrought-out temple's grace—
 column and polished arch forget?
 —But thou that revelest here—spirit that formed this scene,
 They have remembered thee.

Robert Buchanan says of Whitman: "He is loud and coarse, like most prophets, 'sounding,' as he himself phrases it, 'his barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.' He is the voice of which America stood most in need—a voice at which ladies scream and whipper-snappers titter with delight, but which clearly pertains to a man who means to be heard. He is the clear forerunner of the great American poets, long yearned for, now prophesied, but not, perhaps, to be beheld till the vast American democracy has subsided a little from its last and grandest struggle." It is difficult to discover what poetry there is in such spasmodic utterances as the following,—and his book abounds in far worse passages:

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.
The last scud of day holds back for me,
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadowed
wolds,
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you, nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

4. *Humorous Poetry*.—Humorous poetry is that which addresses itself chiefly to our conceptions of the ludicrous. It depends for its effect upon the discovery of sudden and unexpected likenesses, or upon the presentation of an incongruous assemblage of ideas. Its subject is not that which is lofty and impressive in nature or in the character of man; but it deals rather with the absurdities of humanity and those qualities of nature and art which excite our laughter or our contempt. Satire is a variety of humor; and all satirical poetry is, in one sense, humorous poetry. Wit is another variety of humor, and it is an indispensable constituent of satire. I quote Isaac Barrow's celebrated description of it: "Wit," says he, "is a thing so versatile and multiform, appearing in so many shapes, so many postures, so many garbs, so variously apprehended by several eyes and judgments, that it seemeth no less hard to settle a clear and certain notice thereof, than to make a portrait of Proteus or to define the figure of

fleeting air. Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale; sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound; sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of luminous expression; sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude; sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting or cleverly restoring an objection; sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech; in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or in acute nonsense; sometimes a scenical representation of persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a mimical look or gesture passeth for it; sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth it being; sometimes it riseth only from a lucky hitting upon what is strange; sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose; often it consisteth in one knows not what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how. Its ways are unaccountable and inexplicable, being answerable to the numberless roving of fancy and windings of language."

Many poems which we have mentioned under other classifications exhibit, in various degrees, the different qualities of wit or humor, and might be studied simply as examples of humorous poetry. In several of Chaucer's inimitable stories we may see how humor "sometimes lieth in the forging of an apposite tale;" Shakspeare's plays are replete with wit of every description; Pope's *Dunciad* is an admirable example of satiric humor, and his *Rape of the Lock*, of the mock-heroic; while Butler's *Hudibras* excels in the exhibition of the burlesque quality of wit. In this chapter we shall direct our attention to a few noted poems, of a character purely humorous, written simply for the sake of amusement.

Cowper's *Diverting History of John Gilpin* is a good

example of its class. Aside from the simple drollery with which it relates an absurd little story, the piece possesses, in itself, no literary merit whatever. And yet, perhaps, no poem in the English language is more generally known. The story of John Gilpin has taken its place among the classics of the nursery, and is assured of an immortality along with that of Mother Goose and Mother Hubbard. It is chiefly remarkable as being the production of a man naturally gloomy and morose, and totally destitute, under ordinary circumstances, of humor. It, like the *Task*, was written at the suggestion of Mrs. Austen, and refers to a supposed episode in the life of a Mr. Bayer, "an eminent linen-draper" in Cheapside, London.

Goldsmith's pleasing "*Elegies*" may be mentioned alongside with *John Gilpin*. They are excellent examples of that species of wit which "playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound."

Tam O'Shanter, by Robert Burns, is a poem of infinitely higher rank. Indeed, it may well be compared with the best of Chaucer's humorous stories. It is the longest of Burns's poems, and was regarded by its author as his "standard performance in the poetical line." It is a story of All-hallow-Eve, when, according to tradition, the demons and witches are abroad. Tam, after having spent an evening in carousing at a public-house in Ayr, is returning home across the dreary moor, "weel-mounted on his gray mare Meg."

Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles hauding fast his gude blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glowering round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

As he approaches the old ruined Kirk, he is surprised to find it lighted up. Filled with the boldness inspired by "John Barleycorn," he urges his mare close up to the window, and, looking in,

Tam saw an unco sight !
Wárlocks and witches in a dance,
Nae light cotillion new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.

As he watches the dancers, he allows his enthusiasm to get the better of his caution, and

He roars out, " Weel done, Cutty Sark !"
And, in an instant, all was dark ;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

Down the road he flies, pursued by the whole band, who follow him until he crosses a running stream, and is beyond the reach of their power of enchantment ; for,

A running stream they dare na cross

But, although he escapes, the tail of his gray mare is left behind in the hands of his pursuers.

Burns himself says of this poem : " 'Tis true it discovers a spice of roguish waggery, that might, perhaps, as well be spared ; but, then, it shows, in my opinion, a force of genius and a finishing polish that I despair of ever excelling."

The following passages are among those possessing more than ordinary merit :

" As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure."

" But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower—its bloom is shed ;

Or like the snow-falls in the river,
 A moment white—then melts forever;
 Or like the Borealis race,
 That flit ere you can point their place;
 Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
 Evanishing amid the storm."

"Nursing her wrath to keep it warm."

"Inspiring, bold John Barleycorn!
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn!"

"Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
 To think how monie counsels sweet,
 How monie lengthened, sage advices,
 The husband frae the wife despises."

Thomas Carlyle speaks thus of the poem: "It is not so much a poem as a piece of sparkling rhetoric; the heart and body of the story still lies hard and dead. He has not gone back, much less carried us back, into that dark, earnest, wondering age, when the tradition was believed, and when it took its rise; he does not attempt, by any new-modeling of his supernatural ware, to strike anew that deep, mysterious chord of human nature which once responded to such things, and which lives in us, too, and will forever live, though silent now, or vibrating with far other notes, and to far different issues. . . . The piece does not properly cohere: the strange chasm which yawns in our incredulous imaginations between the Ayr public-house and the gate of Tophet is nowhere bridged over; nay, the idea of such a bridge is laughed at; and thus the tragedy of the adventure becomes a mere drunken phantasmagoria, or many-colored spectrum, painted on ale-vapors, and the farce alone has any reality. We do not say that Burns should have made much more of this tradition; we rather think that, for strictly poetical purposes, not much *was* to be made of it. Neither are we blind to the deep, varied, genial power displayed in what he has actually

accomplished; but we find far more 'Shakspearian' qualities, as these of *Tam O'Shanter* have been fondly named, in many of his other pieces; nay, we incline to believe that this latter might have been written, all but quite as well, by a man who, in place of genius, had only possessed talent."

In the year 1812 the brothers James and Horace Smith published a collection of eleven pleasant little poems called *Rejected Addresses; or, the New Theatrum Poetarum*. These poems are imitations in verse of the leading poets of that time, and the history of their production is as follows: When the new Drury Lane Theatre was to be opened, the committee of management offered a prize for the best address to be spoken on that occasion. Forty-three addresses were received, and the committee being unable to decide which was best, rejected all, and employed Lord Byron to write one. These circumstances induced the brothers Smith to write the eleven imitations which they pretended to have been included among the rejected addresses prepared for delivery at the opening of the theatre. The first of these travesties is an imitation of Fitzgerald, and is entitled *Loyal Effusion*. The second, and, perhaps, the best, is a burlesque upon the style of Wordsworth, and is called *The Baby's Début*:

And now, good gentlefolks, I go
To join mamma, and see the show;
So, bidding you adieu,
I curtsy like a pretty miss,
And if you'll blow to me a kiss,
I'll blow a kiss to you.

The third is *An Address without a Phoenix*, and is ascribed to S. T. P., a person existing only in the imagination of the Smiths. The fourth, in imitation of Lord Byron, is called *Oui Bono?* It is a travesty of *Childe Harold*, the following stanza being a good illustration:

For what is Hamlet, but a hare in March?
 And what is Brutus, but a croaking owl?
 And what is Rolla? Cupid steeped in starch,
 Orlando's helmet in Augustin's cowl.
 Shakspeare, how true thine adage, "fair is foul!"
 To him whose soul is with fruition fraught,
 The song of Braham is an Irish howl,
 Thinking is but an idle waste of thought,
 And nought is everything, and everything is nought.

The fifth, *Living Lustres*, is after Thomas Moore. It opens in this manner:

O why should our dull retrospective addresses
 Fall damp as wet blankets on Drury Lane fire?
 Away with blue devils, away with distresses,
 And give the gay spirit to sparkling desire!

Let artists decide on the beauties of Drury,
 The richest to me is when woman is there;
 The question of houses I leave to the jury;
 The fairest to me is the house of the fair.

The sixth is *The Rebuilding*, in imitation of Southey. The seventh is *Drury's Dirge*, "by Laura Matilda," a lady whom "the authors, as in gallantry bound, wish to continue anonymous." The eighth, after Sir Walter Scott, is entitled *A Tale of Drury Lane*:

As Chaos, which by heavenly doom,
 Had slept in everlasting gloom,
 Started with terror and surprise
 When light first flashed upon her eyes—
 So London's sons in nightcap woke,
 In bed-gown woke her dames;
 For shouts were heard 'mid fire and smoke,
 And twice ten hundred voices spoke,
 "The play-house is in flames!"
 And lo! where Catherine street extends,
 A fiery tail its lustre lends

To every window-pane ;
 Blushes each spout in Martlet Court,
 And Barbican, moth-eaten fort,
 And Covent Garden kennels sport,
 A bright ensanguin'd drain ;
 Meux's new brew-house shows the light,
 Rowland Hill's chapel, and the height
 Where patent shot they sell ;
 The Tennis Court, so fair and tall,
 Partakes the ray, with Surgeons' Hall,
 The ticket-porters' house of call,
 Old Bedlam, close by London Wall,
 Wright's shrimp and oyster shop withal,
 And Richardson's hotel.

The ninth is *The Beautiful Incendiary*, in imitation of the Hon. William Spencer. The tenth is *Fire and Ale*, after Monk Lewis. The eleventh, after Coleridge, is entitled *Playhouse Musings*. The closing lines are as follows:

Nought born on earth should die. On hackney stands
 I reverence the coachman who cries "Gee!"
 And spares the lash. When I behold a spider
 Prey on a fly, a magpie on a worm,
 Or view a butcher with horn-handled knife
 Slaughter a tender lamb as dead as mutton,
 Indeed, indeed, I'm very, very sick!

Among the most delightful drolleries to be found anywhere in verse are the *Ingoldsby Legends*, by the Rev. Richard Harris Barham. This collection of legends appeared originally in *Bentley's Miscellany*, and purports to have been found in the Ingoldsby family chest and related by one "Thomas Ingoldsby." The humor of these poems approaches more nearly to that of *Hudibras* than any other similar poem, and, like that work, they are unsparing in their ridicule of hypocrisy and knavery. An English critic says: "It is not too much to say of these pieces that, for originality of design and diction, for

quaint illustration and musical verse, they are not surpassed in the English language."

Thomas Hood, of all humorous poets, is, perhaps, the most widely known. He was, without doubt, the greatest humorist of his age, and his poems, whether humorous or pathetic, occupy a place of too much importance in English literature for the student to pass them by without careful study. Hood's perceptions of whatever was odd or ludicrous were remarkably clear and quick. His imaginative faculties were by no means of the highest order; but his fancy was of the most delicate kind. His wit was playful, sometimes cutting, but always free from coarseness. "Hood's story is sorrowful in contrasts. The life he lived was sadly at variance with the laughter he excited. The prince of punsters jested in his affliction and smiled through his suffering. The pathetic poems which he wrote in his last illness were at once the truest expression of himself, and the noblest productions of his genius." His longest poem is *Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg*; the best-known is the *Song of the Shirt*:

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still, with a voice of dolorous pitch,
She sang the "Song of a Shirt!"

Among Hood's lighter pieces, the student should study *A Nocturnal Sketch*, *Faithless Nellie Gray*, and others of his short poems. No better examples of the different species of humor, or of the various ways in which wit manifests itself, can be found in our language. Among his more sober pieces, the *Dream of Eugene Aram* is worthy of attention, and there is nothing more musically pathetic in the whole range of our literature than the *Bridge of Sighs*.

W. M. Rossetti, writing of Hood, says: "He is too often like a man grinning awry, or interlarding serious and beautiful discourse with a nod, a wink, or a leer, neither requisite nor convenient as auxiliaries to his speech. Sometimes, not very often, we are allowed to reach the close of a poem of his without having our attention jogged and called off by a single interpolation of this kind, and then we feel unalloyed—what we constantly feel, also, even under the contrary conditions—how exquisite a poetic sense and choice a cunning of hand were his. On the whole, we can pronounce him the finest English poet between the generation of Shelley and the generation of Tennyson."

William Makepeace Thackeray, better known as a prose writer and novelist, was the author, also, of a number of humorous poems. Indeed, it was these, with some short contributions to *Punch*, which first directed the attention of the public towards him, and gave him a reputation. Without quoting or even giving the titles of these poems, which are easy of access and should be read by the student, we transcribe the following estimate of Thackeray's humor, from Hannay's *Sketches*:

"There are several varieties of humorists. There is the poetic humorist, in whom the faculty exercises itself on materials supplied by the imagination and the feelings, and there is the humorist who is a man of the world, not necessarily destitute of poetry and sentiment, but who, by preference, draws his materials from observation, analyzing common experience and every-day life. To this latter division Thackeray belongs. He was not without poetry, imagination, and sentiment; nevertheless, these qualities do not hold the same prominence in his writings that they do in those of some other novelists. He is more a humorist than a poet; more a man of the world than a man of sentiment. . . . He is original as a humorist no less than as a novelist. It has been said that his humor was 'broad at once and fine,' and its union of

these two characteristics deserves particular notice. . . . Windy sentimentalism, flatulence of style, these he early began to expose; these, and sordid self-seeking, unkindliness, servility, were what he detested and loved to hold up to contempt."

In continuing the study of humorous poetry we shall be interested in the *Biglow Papers*, by James Russell Lowell, published in 1848. These poems are written in the quaint New England dialect, and, like most poetry of their class, have a strong vein of satire running through them. Several of Lowell's shorter poems are also worthy of notice. For broad humor of the most enjoyable kind few writers have excelled Dr. O. W. Holmes. His wit is of the most delightful character, and even his satire has nothing of bitterness in it. Of all the later poets, none approach so nearly to the inimitable Hood as John G. Saxe, and there is also a singular coincidence in the sadness of the lives of these two remarkable men. The life of Saxe, like that of Hood, has been strangely at variance with the mirth his poems have excited. The most distinguished representative of the new Western school of humorists is Bret Harte. As examples of that style of humor peculiar to the Pacific Slope, *Jim Dow's Flat*, *Plain Language from Truthful James*, and other similar productions of that author, may be mentioned.

5. *Translations*.—Among English poets the favorite subjects for translation have been the great epics of Homer and of Virgil. The first appearance of Homer's *Iliad* in English dress was in 1581, in which year ten books of that epic were translated from a metrical French version into English by one Arthur Hall. It was written in twelve-syllabled rhyming measure. It never attained to any degree of popularity, and is now almost entirely forgotten.

The first complete version of Homer, from the original Greek, was the work of George Chapman. Of this translation seven books were published in 1598, and in 1611

the entire work appeared under the following title: *The Iliads of Homer, Prince of Poets. Never before in any language truly translated. With a comment uppon some of his chief places: Done according to the Greeke by George Chapman.* This work is written in rhymed verses of fourteen syllables, a measure which corresponds more nearly to the Greek hexameter than does the ordinary ten-syllabled heroic verse of English poetry. Chapman's translation, after the lapse of nearly three centuries, is still regarded with the highest favor. He was the first to introduce into our language a number of compound epithets, very Homeric in their origin and very serviceable in poetry, such as *silver-footed* Thetis, *high-walled* Thebes, the *silver-flowing* floods, the *strong-winged* lance. Warton says: "Chapman by no means represented the dignity or the simplicity of Homer. He is sometimes periphrastic or redundant, but more frequently retrenches or impoverishes what he could not feel and express. In the meantime, he labors with the inconvenience of an awkward, inharmonious, and unheroic measure, imposed by custom but disgusting to modern ears." Hallam says: "Chapman's translation, with all its defects, is often exceedingly Homeric. . . . Chapman is often uncouth, often unmusical, and often low; but the spirited and rapid flow of his metre makes him respectable to lovers of poetry." Lowell says: "The Homer of Chapman, whatever its defects, alone of all English versions, has this crowning merit of being, where it is most successful, thoroughly alive. He has made for us the best poem that has yet been Englished out of Homer, and in so far gives us a truer idea of him."

Pope's translation of Homer was published in 1715. Perhaps the best criticism that has ever been made upon it was that of Bentley, who said to the poet: "It is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer." But Dr. Johnson, speaking of Pope, says: "He cultivated our language with so much diligence and art that he has left in his Homer a treasure of poetic elegances to posterity."

His version may be said to have tuned the English tongue; for since its appearance no writer, however deficient in other powers, has wanted melody." M. Taine says: "Pope's *Iliad* was the *Iliad* written in the style of the *Henriade*: by virtue of this travesty the public admired it. The men of his time would not have admired it in the simple Greek guise; they only consented to see it in powder and ribbons. It was the costume of the time, and it was very necessary to put it on." Shaw says: "It will, nevertheless, be always regarded as a noble monument of our national literature; and it is difficult to imagine how many readers, to whom the original Greek was inaccessible, have filled their minds with the brilliant, though refracted, effulgence of the great sun of poetry, by studying the graceful couplets of Pope."

Another version of Homer was published in the same year (1715) by Thomas Tickell. Addison, in speaking of the two rival editions, remarked that both were well done, but that Tickell's had more of Homer. This implied censure of his work impelled Pope to speak of Addison, in one of his satires,* as one

"Who when two wits on rival themes contest
Approves of both, but likes the worse the best."

Tickell's version has long been forgotten, and Pope's, with all its defects, retains much of its original popularity.

Cowper's translation of the *Iliad*, made in 1781, is now no longer read.

Between the years 1846 and 1871 no fewer than seventeen attempts have been made at the rendering of the *Iliad* into graceful and poetical English. Of these numerous versions, only two are worthy of our attention here—that of Lord Derby, made in 1867, and that of William Cullen Bryant, made in 1870. Both of these are of a very high poetical order, and both possess merits distinctively

* *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.*

their own. Both are written in heroic blank verse. The following extracts, from corresponding passages in the three best-known English versions of Homer, are here given in order to illustrate the various ways in which the different poets express the same thought. The passage quoted is the prayer of Hector upon parting with his wife and child, and is found in the sixth book of the *Iliad* near the end.

[*From Pope.*]

Thus having spoke, th' illustrious chief of Troy
 Stretch'd his fond arms to clasp the lovely boy.
 The babe clung crying to his nurse's breast,
 Scared at the dazzling helm and nodding crest.
 With secret pleasure each fond parent smiled,
 And Hector hasted to relieve his child,
 The glitt'ring terrors from his brows unbound,
 And placed the beaming helmet on the ground;
 Then kiss'd the child, and lifting high in air,
 Thus to the gods preferr'd a father's prayer:
 "O thou whose glory fills th' ethereal throne,
 All ye deathless powers, protect my son!
 Grant him like me to purchase just renown,
 To guard the Trojans, to defend the crown;
 Against his country's foes the war to wage,
 And rise the Hector of the future age!
 So when triumphant from successful toils
 Of heroes slain, he bears the reeking spoils,
 Whole hosts may hail him with deserv'd acclaim,
 And say, 'This chief transcends his father's fame;
 While pleased amidst the general shouts of Troy
 His mother's conscious heart o'erflows with joy."

[*From Derby.*]

Thus as he spoke great Hector stretch'd his arms
 To take his child; but back the infant shrank,
 Crying, and sought his nurse's shelt'ring breast,
 Scar'd by the brazen helm and horse-hair plume,
 That nodded, fearful on the warrior's crest.

Laugh'd the fond parents both, and from his brow,
Hector the casque remov'd, and set it down,
All glitt'ring on the ground; then kiss'd his child,
And danc'd him in his arms; then thus to Jove,
And to th' Immortals all address'd his prayer:

"Grant, Jove, and all ye gods, that this my son
May be, as I, the foremost man of Troy,
For valor fam'd, his country's guardian King;
That men may say, 'This youth surpasses far
His father,' when they see him from the fight,
From slaughtered foes, with bloody spoils of war
Returning, to rejoice his mother's heart!"

[From *Bryant*.]

So speaking, mighty Hector stretch'd his arms
To take the boy; the boy shrank crying back
To his fair nurse's bosom, scared to see
His father helmeted in glitt'ring brass,
And eyeing with affright the horse-hair plume
That grimly nodded from the lofty crest.
At this, both parents in their fondness laughed;
And hastily the mighty Hector took
The helmet from his brow, and laid it down
Gleaming upon the ground; and, having kiss'd
His darling son and toss'd him up in play,
Pray'd thus to Jove, and all the gods of heaven;

"O Jupiter and all ye deities,
Vouchsafe that this my son may yet become
Among the Trojans eminent like me,
And nobly rule in Ilium. May they say,
'This man is greater than his father was!'
When they behold him from the battle-field
Bring back the bloody spoil of the slain foe,—
That so his mother may be glad at heart!"

The first translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* into English was made by Gawain Douglas, a Scotchman, in 1513. It is written in the Lowland Scotch dialect, and, without a vocabulary, is almost entirely unintelligible to an Eng-

lishman. In 1552 a translation of the second and fourth books, by Lord Surrey, was published. It was in this translation that blank verse first made its appearance in English poetry. "No one had," says Hallam, "before this time, known how to translate or to imitate with appropriate expression. But the structure of Surrey's verse is not very harmonious, and the sense is rarely carried beyond the line."

As the reader may be curious to see a specimen of the earliest English blank verse, we quote the following passage from the second book, describing the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy:

We cleft the walles and closures of the towne,
 Whereto all helpe; and underset the feet
 With sliding rolles, and bound his neck with ropes.
 The fatal gin thus overclambe our walles,
 Stuft with armed men: about the which there ran
 Children and maides, that holy carolles sang.
 And well were they whose hands might touch the cordes!
 With thretning chere, thus slided through our town
 The subtill tree, to Pallas temple-ward.
 O native land, Ilion, and of the goddes
 The mansion place! O warlike walles of Troy!
 Four times it stopt in thentrie of our gate,
 Four times the harnesse clattered in the wombe.

The next translation of Virgil was made by Thomas Phaier, one of the contributors to the *Mirror for Magistrates*. He lived to complete only the first nine books, and his work was taken up and finished by Thomas Twyne, a physician of Lewes, in Sussex. The publication of this translation was begun in 1555, and was completed in 1584. It was so well received that three new editions were issued previous to 1620. The work is now entirely obsolete.

In 1583 Richard Stanihurst, an Englishman, then residing at Leyden, translated the first four books of Virgil into English hexameters. His attempt at "writing Virgil

in Virgil's own measure" met with encouraging approval at first, but the reader who compares his absurd hexameters with Surrey's flowing metre will not wonder why Stanihurst is now forgotten. The following is the way in which he describes the incident of Laocoon's throwing his spear against the wooden horse :

My lief for an haufpennie, Troians,
 Either heere ar couching some troups of Greekish assemblie,
 Or to crush our bulwarcks this woork is forged, al houses
 For to prie surmounting thee toune : soom practis or oother
 Heere lurcks of coonning ; trust not this treacherus ensigne ;
 And for a ful reckning, I like not barrel or herring ;
 Thee Greeks bestowing their presents Greekish I feare mee !
 Thus said, he stout rested, with his chaapt staffe speedily running
 Strong the steed he chargeth, thee planck ribs manfully riding.
 Then the iade, hit, shivered, thee vaults haulf shrillie rebounded
 With clush, clash buzzing, with drooming clattered humming.

In 1697 John Dryden completed his famous translation of Virgil, and it was published by Jacob Tonson, who paid the author £1200 for the work. Although possessing serious faults, and regarded by the critics as being the least praiseworthy of all Dryden's poetical works, yet this translation still holds the most honorable place among English versions of the *Aeneid*. As the student is expected to make a thorough and careful study of this work, we shall quote no extracts. The critics are very generally agreed that Dryden was not fitted for the task of translating Virgil. "His mind," says one, "was more rapid and vehement than that of his original, but by far less elegant and judicious." Another says: "Virgil's predominant quality is majesty indeed, but majesty always tempered with consummate grace; and Dryden, however characterized by majesty, was certainly deficient in grace and elegance. The robust and somewhat masculine genius of Dryden could not perfectly assume the virginal and *ideal refinement* of the Diana-like Muse of Mantua."

Since Dryden's time, Virgil has been translated, with but indifferent success, by Christopher Pitt in 1740, by John Conington in 1870, and by William Morris in 1876. Of Christopher Pitt's version, Dr. Johnson remarked: "Pitt pleases the critics, and Dryden the people; Pitt is quoted, and Dryden read." To show the peculiar style of versification adopted by Conington, we give the following extract. It is the passage describing Æneas's vision of Dido in the lower world:

'Mid these among the branching treen
 Sad Dido moved, the Tyrian queen,
 Her death-wound ghastly yet and green.
 Soon as Æneas caught the view
 And through the mist her semblance knew,
 Like one who spies, or thinks he spies,
 Through flickering clouds the new moon rise,)
 The tear-drop from his eyelids broke,
 And thus in tenderest tones he spoke:—
 " Ah Dido! rightly then I read
 The news that told me you were dead,
 Slain by your own rash hand!
 Myself the cause of your despair!
 Now by the blessed stars I swear,
 By heaven, by all that dead men keep
 In reverence here 'mid darkness deep,
 Against my will, ill-fated fair,
 I parted from your land."

Morris renders the same passage thus:

'Midst whom Phœnician Dido now, fresh from the iron bane,
 Went wandering in the mighty wood; and when the Trojan man
 First dimly knew her standing by amid the glimmer wan
 E'en as in earliest of the month one sees the moon arise,
 Or seems to see her at the least in cloudy drift of skies—
 He spake, and let the tears fall down by all love's sweetness
 stirred:
 " Unhappy Dido, was it true, that bitter following word,
 That thou wert dead, by sword hadst sought the utter end of all?

Was it thy very death I wrought? Ah! on the stars I call,
 I call the gods, and whatso faith the nether earth may hold,
 To witness that against my will I left thy field and fold!"

Of the translations of other Latin poets, the following brief mention will suffice: A large number of English poets and scholars have essayed the translation of the poems of Horace. The first attempt was a version of the first two *Satires*, by Thomas Colwell, in 1565. The best translations are those of the *Satires*, *Epistles*, and *Art of Poetry*, by John Conington; of the *Odes and Epodes*, by Lord Lytton; and of the *Odes, Epodes, and Satires*, by T. Martin, all published in 1869. Pope's imitations are also worthy of attention.

Of Juvenal, we have the imitations written by Dryden (1693), by Dr. Johnson, in his poems, *London*, and the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, elsewhere noticed, and the translation by Gifford in 1802.

The best translation of Dante's *Divina Commedia* has been made by our own poet, Henry W. Longfellow. This translation was completed in 1870, after, it is said, a labor of more than thirty years. The poet has adhered very strictly to his original, preserving not only the general style, but even the metre.

The best translation of Goethe's *Faust* has been made by another American poet, Bayard Taylor. It was completed in 1871, and, like Longfellow's *Dante*, is a surprisingly faithful rendering of the original work.

Literary Forgeries.—Our study of English poetry would be incomplete without some special notice of the productions of that remarkable character, Thomas Chatterton, and also of those much-controverted compositions called the poems of Ossian.

Thomas Chatterton was born in Bristol in 1752, the son of a poor sexton who was also parish schoolmaster. At the age of eleven years the boy produced some verses of considerable poetic merit. He had a fondness for antiquities, and, though he had received but little education, he con-

ceived the plan of playing upon the reviving taste for our old national literature by inventing a series of mock-antique poems and palming them off upon the public as the work of some literary genius of a past age. The church of St. Mary Redcliffe, of which Chatterton's father had been sexton, is one of those noble mediæval buildings in which Bristol abounds. It was the place where Canynge, a rich citizen of the time of Edward IV., had been buried. In an old chest, for a long time kept in this church, and called Canynge's coffer, there were numerous documents and charters referring to Canynge's gifts to the church. Some of these had been removed elsewhere for preservation, while a large number of parchments, supposed to be worthless, had been thrown aside, and were afterwards used by Chatterton's father in making covers for the copy-books of his pupils. The sight of these strange old documents no doubt induced the young poet to attempt the forging of a whole series of works purporting to have been found in Canynge's coffer. The antique poems which he finally produced, in pursuance of this plan, were ascribed to one Thomas Rowley, an imaginary monk of the fifteenth century. These poems are written upon a variety of topics, and all of them exhibit unmistakable poetic genius. To give them the desired air of antiquity, the boy introduced numerous quaint and odd-looking words, such as were used by Chaucer and his contemporaries, and he affected a grotesqueness of style and spelling such as he imagined to belong to the fifteenth century. He also discolored the parchment upon which he wrote, and imitated, as nearly as possible, the antiquated handwriting of the fictitious Rowley. The grammatical structure of his lines, however, in no way differs from the English of the eighteenth century; and when we divest his words of their fantastic spelling, the antiquated appearance of his verses entirely disappears.

The poems which he ascribed to Rowley embrace every variety of poetical composition—ballads, pastorals, dramas,

tragedies, etc. They are characterized by a singular beauty of finish and a wonderful richness of imagery, and yet they are marred by many of the faults peculiar to the immaturity and extravagance of youth. Chatterton also contributed numerous articles to the newspapers and magazines of the day, and wrote some poetry in his own character and over his own signature; but these are decidedly inferior to those which he ascribed to Rowley. In 1770, at the age of eighteen, he repaired to London with the intention of devoting his energies entirely to literature.

"My first attempt," said he, "shall be in the literary way; the promises I have received are sufficient to dispel doubt; but should I, contrary to expectation, find myself deceived, I will, in that case, turn Methodist preacher. Credulity is as potent a deity as ever, and a new sect may easily be devised. But if that, too, shall fail me, my last and final resource is a pistol." He arrived in the metropolis in the latter part of April, and for a time met with such success as to render him extremely hopeful. But in July these bright prospects became clouded; he was disappointed in his hopes of preferment and patronage, and finally fell into such indigence that he was in want of necessary food. On the 24th of August, 1770, in a fit of utter despair, he swallowed a dose of arsenic, and was found next morning dead in his bed, surrounded by the fragments of numerous manuscripts which he had destroyed. Such, in brief, was the remarkable career of this most remarkable youth. He was an avowed infidel, but his moral character seems to have been almost without blemish. His ruling passion was a desire for literary fame, and yet he gave up the struggle for its acquisition before his powers had been fully developed. His affection for his mother and sister was of the sincerest, purest character, and yet, by the last act of his life, he brought upon them the severest affliction. According to the testimony of his family, he was a lover of truth from the earliest

dawn of reason, and yet his literary life was one career of deception. Dr. Johnson said that Chatterton was "the most extraordinary young man that had encountered his knowledge." Mr. Mahone declared that he believed him to have been "the greatest genius that England has produced since the days of Shakspeare." Dean Milles pronounced his poems to be superior to those of Homer, Virgil, Spenser, or Shakspeare. Coleridge speaks of him as

"Young-ey'd Poesy
All deftly masked in hoar antiquity."

And Wordsworth, in like mood, alludes to him as

"The marvelous boy,
The sleepless soul that perished in his pride!"

His best works are the ballad of *Sir Charles Bawdin* and the tragedy called *Ella*. A beautiful and characteristic lyric in the latter is the *Mymstrelles Songe*, of which we quote a few stanzas below :

O! synge untoe mie roundelaie,
Oh! droppe the brynie teare wythe mee,
Daunce ne moe atte hallie daie,
Lycke a rennynge ryver bee;
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Blacke hys cryne as the wyntere nyghte,
Whyte hys rode as the sommer snowe,
Rodde his face as the mornynge lyghte,
Cald he lyes ynne the grave belowe;
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree. . . .

Comme, wythe acornie-coppe and thorne,
Drayne mie hartys blodde awaie;

Lyfe and alle yts goode I scorne,
 Daunce bie nete, or feaste bie daie.
 Mie love ys dedde,
 Gon to hys death-bedde,
 Al under the wyllowe tree.

Waterre wytyches, crownede wythe reytes
 Bere mee to yer leathalle tyde.
 I die; I comme; mie true love waytes.—
 Thos the damselle spake, and dyed.

The following stanzas are also taken from the tragedy of *Ella*, the spelling being modernized. The first is a description of morning, and reminds us forcibly of Spenser's happiest style:

Bright sun had in his ruddy robes been dight,
 From the red east he flitted with his train;
 The Houris draw away the gate of Night,
 Her sable tapestry was rent in twain:
 The dancing streaks bedecked heaven's plain,
 And on the dew did smile with skimmering eye,
 Like gouts of blood which do black armor stain,
 Shining upon the bourn which standeth by;
 The soldiers stood upon the hillis side,
 Like young enleaved trees which in a forest bide.

The second describes the coming of spring:

The budding floweret blushes at the light,
 The meads be sprinkled with the yellow hue,
 In daisied mantles is the mountain dight,
 The fresh young cowslip bendeth with the dew;
 The trees enleaved, into heaven straight,
 When gentle winds do blow, to whistling din is brought.
 The evening comes, and brings the dews along,
 The ruddy welkin shineth to the cyne,
 Around the ale-stake minstrels sing the song,
 Young ivy round the door post doth entwine;
 I lay me on the grass, yet to my will
Albeit all is fair, there lacketh something still.

The following very just estimate of Chatterton and his works is offered by Hazlitt in his lectures on the English poets: "As to those who are really capable of admiring Chatterton's genius, or of feeling an interest in his fate, I would only say that I never heard any one speak of any one of his works as if it were an old, well-known favorite, and had become a faith and a religion in his mind. It is his name, his youth, and what he might have lived to have done, that excite our wonder and admiration. He has the same sort of posthumous fame that an actor of the last age has—an abstracted reputation which is independent of anything we know of his works. The admirers of Collins never think of him without recalling to their minds his *Ode on Evening* or on the *Poetical Character*. Gray's *Elegy* and his popularity are identified together, and inseparable even in imagination. It is the same with respect to Burns; when you speak of him as a poet, you mean his works, his *Tam O'Shanter*, or his *Cotter's Saturday Night*. But the enthusiasts for Chatterton, if you ask for the proofs of his extraordinary genius, are obliged to turn to the volume, and perhaps find there what they seek; but it is not in their minds; and it is of *that* I spoke. . . . With an unaccountable power coming over him at an unusual age, and with the youthful confidence it inspired, Chatterton performed wonders, and was willing to set a seal on his reputation by a tragic catastrophe. He had done his best; and, like another Empedocles, threw himself into *Ætna*, to insure immortality. The brazen slippers alone remain!"

The controversy in regard to the genuineness of the poems ascribed to Rowley was short-lived. Indeed, the evidences of imposture were so plain on their very face that the dullest critic, unless willfully blind, could not fail to discover the fraud. Dr. Johnson, Horace Walpole, Gibbon, Sheridan, in fact, all the scholars of that time, were united in admiring the genius of Chatterton and in denying the existence of Rowley. With regard to the

Poems of Ossian and their reputed collector, however, the case was very different. There were but few, if any, marks of imposture to be detected in these works themselves, and evidence of an external character was difficult to obtain. The dispute in regard to their authenticity was long and bitterly waged, and even at the present day the critics are not all agreed upon that question. The story of Ossian's poems is briefly as follows:

James Macpherson was a Scotchman, a Highland schoolmaster, and a literary adventurer of rather doubtful reputation. In 1759 he made a collection of ancient poems and songs,—not a very extensive one, however,—which he professed to have heard recited in the Gaelic language among the Highlands. This collection he submitted to the notice of Home, the author of the tragedy of *Douglas*, by whom they were extravagantly praised. The result was that, in 1760, they were printed under the title of *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*. This work attained an immediate popularity, and vehement controversies in regard to their authenticity soon sprang up. Macpherson, encouraged by the reception of his first imperfect collection, now spent some time among the Gaels of the Highlands searching for further remains of ancient poetry. The result was the discovery, not of fragments, merely, but of two epics called, respectively, *Fingal* and *Temora*. These poems, when published, were received with the most intense enthusiasm throughout Europe. They were translated into almost every modern language; in Germany they were immensely popular; they were known and admired even in Russia; they were read with pleasure in France and Italy. But they were, from the very first, denounced by Dr. Johnson—always prejudiced against anything Scotch—as a cheat and a forgery. In the first place, he denied that the poems possessed any real merit in themselves; then he asserted that there never were any Erse manuscripts in existence; he denied that the inhabitants of the “Highlands or Hebrides ever wrote their

native language;" he declared that "it was never asserted that any man of integrity could recite six lines of the original Ossian;" and, lastly, he maintained the opinion that the poems of Ossian "never existed in any other form than that which we have seen." Dr. Johnson was supported in the controversy which he thus began by Hume the historian and by antiquaries such as Malcolm Laing and Pinkerton. On the other hand, the genuineness of the poems was stoutly asserted by Gray, Blair, Lord Kames, and the Scotch people in general. A third party, consisting of Irish antiquaries, with Lord Neaves at their head, claimed that the Ossianic poems, instead of being ascribed to a Highland source, "should be considered generally as Irish compositions relating to Irish personages, real or imaginary, and to Irish events, historical or legendary."

We have not the space to enter into the particulars of this famous controversy. There seems to be no doubt but that there were Gaelic manuscripts in existence, and that Macpherson had obtained possession of some of these; but just how far his works are ancient and genuine, and how far they are merely spurious compositions of his own, it would be difficult now to determine. Principal Shairp thus gives expression to the latest opinions on this question: "Whatever may be the true theory as to how the epic of *Fingal* assumed its present shape, I must conclude by stating that the longer I have studied the question, the more I have been convinced that Macpherson was a translator, not an author; that he found, and did not create, his materials; that all the more important part of his Ossian is ancient, and had long existed in the Highlands; and that, at the time he undertook his collection, the Highlands were a quarry, out of which many more Ossianic blocks and fragments might have been dug."

We quote the following extract as an illustration of the style in which Ossian's poems are written.

Ossian's Address to the Sun.

I feel the sun, O Malvina! leave me to my rest. Perhaps they may come to my dreams. I think I hear a feeble voice! The beam of heaven delights to shine on the grave of Carthon: I feel it warm around.

O thou that rollest above, round as the shield of my fathers! Whence are thy beams, O sun! thy everlasting light! Thou comest forth in thy awful beauty; the stars hide themselves in the sky; the moon, cold and pale, sinks in the western wave; but thou, thyself, movest alone. Who can be a companion of thy course? The oaks of the mountains fall; the mountains themselves decay with years; the ocean shrinks and grows again; the moon herself is lost in heaven, but thou art forever the same, rejoicing in the brightness of thy course. When the world is dark with tempests, when thunder rolls and lightning flies, thou lookest on thy beauty from the clouds, and laughest at the storm. But to Ossian thou lookest in vain, for he beholds thy beams no more; whether thy yellow hair flows on the eastern clouds, or thou tremblest at the gates of the west. But thou art, perhaps, like me—for a season; thy years will have an end. Thou shalt sleep in thy clouds careless of the voice of the morning. Exult, then, O Sun, in the strength of thy youth! Age is dark and unlovely; it is like the glimmering light of the moon when it shines through broken clouds, and the mist is on the hills: the blast of the north is on the plain; the traveler shrinks in the midst of his journey.

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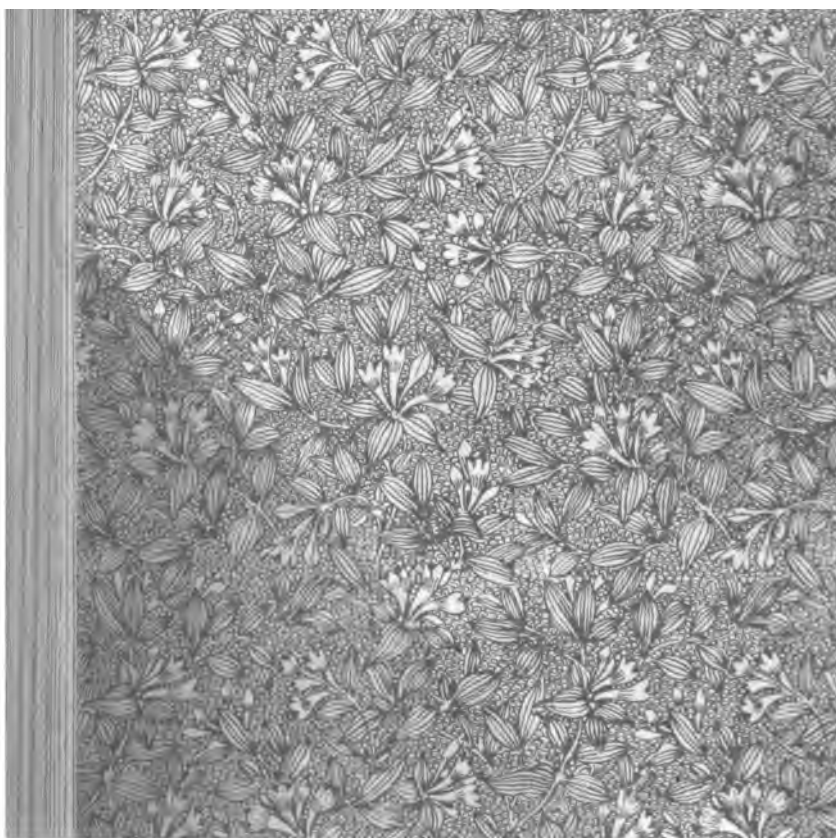
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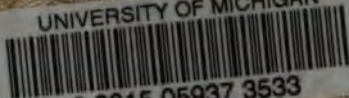
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